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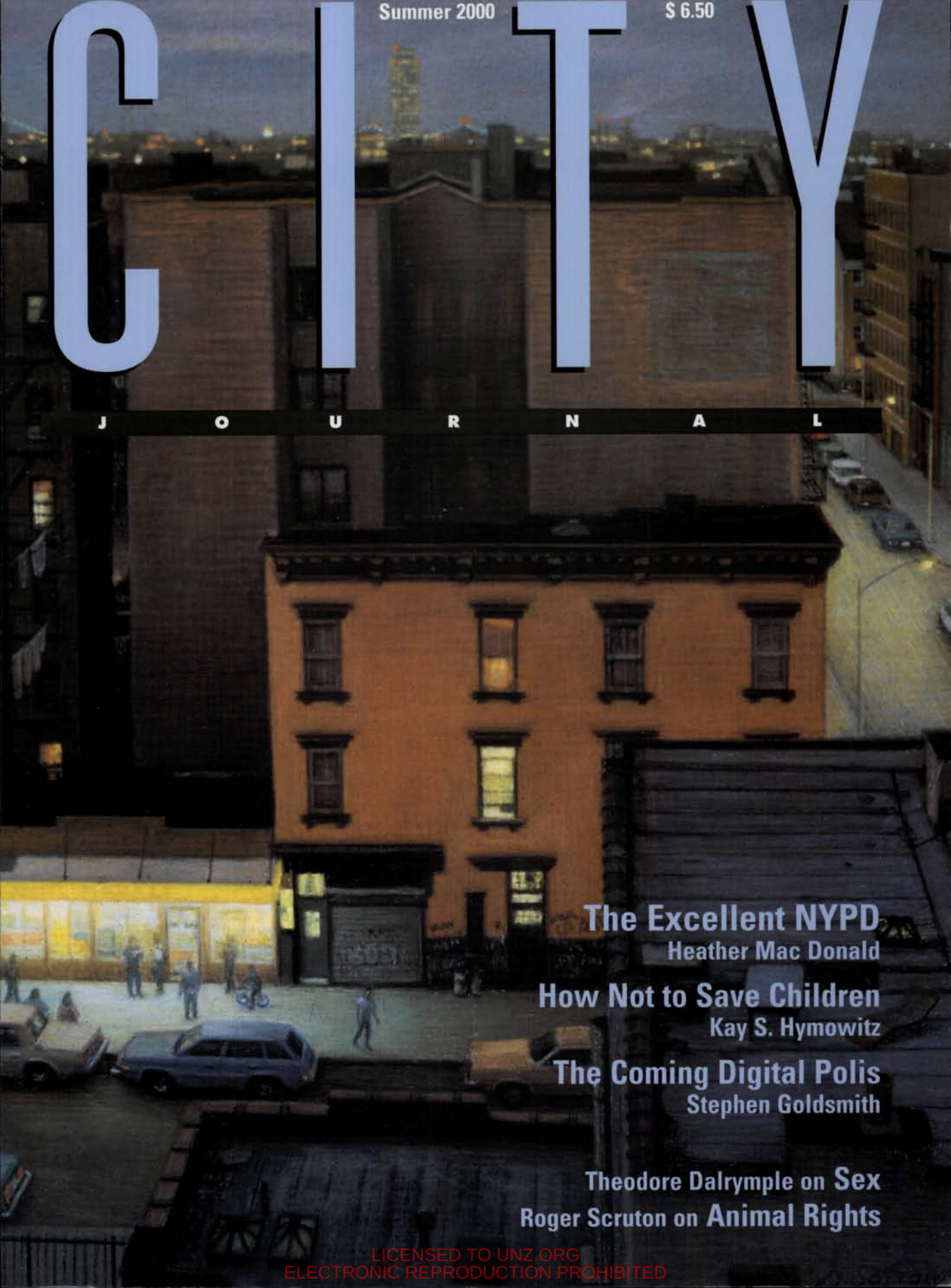

The Excellent NYPD
Heather Mac Donald

How Not to Save Children
Kay S. Hymowitz

The Coming Digital Polis
Stephen Goldsmith

Theodore Dalrymple on **Sex**

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In Prospect

This issue of *City Journal* brims with optimism, much of it focusing on the promise the Information Revolution offers to cities. In "The Coming Digital Polis" on page 52, former Indianapolis mayor Stephen Goldsmith shows how information technology, which has already transformed private industry, now stands poised to work its magic for governments, too: shrinking bureaucracy, cutting costs, speeding up transactions, tailoring services to individual citizens, and sparking the rethinking of assumptions that, in private industry, led to huge efficiencies and an Aladdin-like world of choice and ease for consumers. The process has already begun in many city halls and statehouses; what's needed now, Goldsmith argues, is political leadership that can overcome the resistance bureaucrats and public-employee unions are sure to oppose to any change that threatens their power and prerogatives. The stakes are high: cities that don't achieve the small, cheap, efficient government that urban reformers like *City Journal* have advocated—and that today's entrepreneurs demand—will find themselves losing business to cities that *do* achieve it.

Part of the digital revolution's promise is already coming to realization in New York City, as Steven Malanga shows in "The Triumph of Silicon Alley" on page 42. When the Internet-based New Media industry first began to sprout in lower Manhattan several years ago, observers tended to dismiss it as a flash in the pan. The real action in the digital world was happening out West, they said, in the latte towns and suburban geek valleys where techies go to create their virtual realities, linked to the larger world via modem. Cities, the pundits sniffed, were *so* twentieth century. But a new industry that almost overnight has created 138,000 new jobs in New York City, with an $8.3 billion annual payroll and producing revenues of $16.8 billion in the metropolitan area, is not negligible. And this industry flourishes in New York precisely because of its urban-ness: its thick concentration of creative, ambitious, plugged-in people who produce the needed content for New Media, its storehouse of accumulated business and old-media expertise to update for the digital future, its forward-looking investment bankers and venture capitalists willing to bankroll the new companies, and the rich cross-fertilization that can occur when so much energy pulsates in so finite a space. New York has the talent, and the Information Revolution just allows it to project that talent all over the globe.

As with the digital polis, though, this is a happy development that old-paradigm politics can retard. Politicians at the state and local level have to decide if they will create the low-tax, business-friendly environment that will allow this industry to flourish as it begins to produce taxable profits, or if high taxes will chase it out of town. The choice is between a twenty-first-century city, vibrating with energy and nurturing middle-class, entrepreneurial life, or the big-government, municipal-welfare-state model that is slowly crumbling into the dustbin of history.

One key factor in allowing Silicon Alley to bloom has been the Giuliani administration's extraordinary success in cutting New York City's crime in half. Crime, it turns out, is a giant, business-killing tax, and once customers and employees can come and go in safety, commerce and culture flourish and the middle class grows—as urban thinkers have known for centuries. It is thus a notable peculiarity of Gotham at the turn of the millennium that the city's political and intellectual elites, led by the newspaper of record, and the minority community's self-appointed leadership, led by the egregious Al Sharpton, should have teamed up over the last year to discredit that epochal accomplishment, the greatest urban triumph of the last half-century. Heather Mac Donald's "America's Best Urban Police Force" on page 14 demolishes the distortions with relentless logic and sets the record straight with irrefutable facts. Don't miss it.

A great friend of *City Journal*, William E. Simon, died in June. As president of the John M. Olin Foundation, he was one of the magazine's staunchest supporters and most generous benefactors. On a larger scale, as Gerald Ford's secretary of the Treasury, he was a great friend of New York, too, though few thought so at the time. He refused a federal bailout when the profligacy of the city's political leaders brought Gotham to the precipice of bankruptcy, and by doing so, he forced the city to rein in its spendthrift ways. His is a lesson the city needs to recall as it looks to nurture its New Media future. ■

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Soundings

Why New York Democrats Love Hillary

New York's Democratic Party favors ideology over region. Small wonder they've embraced an ideology-laden carpetbagger.

New York Democrats may shrug off the carpetbagger charge thrown at Senate candidate Hillary Clinton, but their indifference to her never having lived in the state reveals something important.

America's Founding Fathers had clear reasons for devising a political system in which states would send representatives to the national legislature. Each state, the Founders argued, would always have regional interests, which needed a hearing in the national decision-making process, if states were to go along with decisions they disagreed with and the republic were to work.

This idea of governance—crucial to the nation's success in reconciling its often fractious diversity with an energetic executive—still runs through the thinking of Democrats and Republicans in most of the country. But in New York, the Democratic Party abandoned it long ago in favor of a left-wing ideology closer in spirit to European social democracy. This ideology, which takes a national rather than a regional or local perspective, has led New York Democrats to embrace big-government schemes regardless of their impact on the state's prosperity.

A single 1993 policy debate gives an especially clear glimpse into this key difference between New York Democrats and fellow party members elsewhere in the country. President Bill Clinton had just proposed to Congress a sizable tax-hike plan that he falsely claimed wouldn't hit any part of the country disproportionately. The plan included new taxes on energy production and gasoline and a boost in the income tax. Democratic and Republican congressmen from energy-producing states like Louisiana and Texas strongly objected to the energy tax, and with the help of former Texas Democratic senator Lloyd Bentsen (then Clinton's secretary of the Treasury) they quickly killed it. Members of Congress from western states banded together across party lines to water down the gas tax, since it would hurt residents in their sprawling part of the country, where long drives are the rule.

The federal income-tax increase, which would hurt New York more than any other state, passed easily, though. New York City residents—40 percent of New York State's population—have higher per-capita income than citizens in most of the country, but it's more expensive to live there. Unlike elsewhere, a family of four living in Gotham with an annual income of $100,000 is hardly in the lap of luxury. But the feds don't index federal income taxes for cost of living, so they whack New Yorkers, especially those living in or near New York City, hard.

Yet not a Democratic member of New York's congressional delegation rose up to oppose the income-tax hike. Even the venerable senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, whose office regularly issues reports claiming that the state sends more tax money to Washington than it gets back in federal goodies, voted for it, worsening the very problem he so often bemoans. This startling indifference to New York's regional interests is perplexing to Wall Street execs, who grumble that they get more attention paid to their problems from out-of-state congressmen than they do from the state's own Democratic congressional delegation.

Nor did any New York Democrat raise so much as a peep when the state party nominated Hillary Clinton as its Senate candidate. Yet in 1993, her health-care task force made bold recommendations to revolutionize the nation's health-care system—including the adoption of regional pricing pools and restrictions on specialized medical education—that would have really hurt New York, with its high medical costs, its bigger share of elderly and of very ill citizens, and its large complex of teaching hospitals.

New Yorkers have paid a heavy price for this social democratic, anti-regional mind-set. Thanks to the swollen welfare state that this worldview has created, taxpaying entrepreneurial types and the wealthy elderly have fled the state in droves, in search of more welcoming economic climes. The state has gone from first to third in total population since 1950 and will soon slip behind Florida into fourth place, causing it to lose almost 40 percent of its congressional delegation over the same period. During the same half-century, the state has also lost more than two-thirds of the Fortune 500 companies once located there.

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Hillary Clinton, a candidate for all places, is a natural for a party that considers itself above the concerns of a mere state. —*William J. Stern*

Doing Better Than We Thought

New research shows that America is still the land of opportunity.

Poverty advocates often wag an accusing finger at the United States for what they call its third-world child-poverty rates and income disparities. They might want to look, though, at Urban Institute economist Robert Lerman's recent research.

Most studies show the gap between the richest and poorest Americans widening by as much as 16 percent and the child-poverty rate worsening between 1980 and the mid- to late nineties. But, Lerman argues, these alarming trends mask a crucial point: nearly 16 million immigrants flooded into the U.S. between 1980 and 1998. Unlike immigrants who came to the U.S. before 1980, 90 percent of the newcomers hailed from dirt-poor countries. Thirty-six percent had no high school diploma, more than double the percentage of pre-1980 U.S. residents without diplomas. It's unsurprising that a country that opens its doors to the tired and huddled masses in this way would have a sizable contingent of the temporarily poor.

What would things look like if you excluded immigrants from these comparisons? Sure enough, Lerman discovered, a different, and sunnier, picture emerges. Yes, income inequality has widened, but its rate of increase decreases by as much as a quarter. The child-poverty rate actually *declines* over the last 20 years from 16.6 to 16.3 percent. Poverty among children in married-couple families falls dramatically—from nearly 10 percent to 6 percent.

The problem with this experiment, of course, is that if you exclude immigrants you're excluding a full 7 percent of the workforce in the late nineties. If you do include them, though, Lerman holds, a more accurate gauge of U.S. inequality and child poverty trends would compare the same people in 1980—wherever they lived at the time—with the same people in 1998. Earlier studies included Juan's 1998 salary of $15,000 in the U.S. but not Juan's 1980 salary of $2,000 in El Salvador; Lerman included both.

An even brighter picture develops. Instead of a surge of inequality in recent decades, there's only a small increase, almost entirely the result of a growing number of single-parent families. Inequality has not grown at all among married-couple families. The rate of child poverty declines from 19 percent to 17.9 percent. Children in married-couple families see their poverty rate cut in half, from 15.2 percent to 8.2 percent.

In fact, Lerman estimates, a full third of poor children living with both a father and mother are immigrants. If the trends he describes continue, many of them won't be poor for long.

—*Kay S. Hymowitz*

GIRAUDON/ART RESOURCE

Bowling Green, 1828

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Soundings

Affirmative Reaction?

College kids say no to the shibboleths of their left-wing profs.

If only George Orwell had lived long enough to encounter the phrase "affirmative action." What a splendid piece of Newspeak: love is hate, war is peace, and preferential treatment is an agent of equality—for of course "affirmative action" really means preferential treatment on the basis of race, sex, or some other duly certified badge of alleged victimhood. By thus re-christening preferential treatment, liberals have been able to ignore equality, merit, and other inconveniences as they attempt to remake the world; they can practice racial and sexual discrimination while posing as apostles of fairness.

But there are hopeful signs that the culture of affirmative action may be cracking, and where one might least expect it: on campus. A recent poll shows that more than 90 percent of U.S. college students oppose racial preferences in admissions. The poll, conducted by John Zogby for the Foundation for Academic Standards & Tradition, reveals that while a large majority (84.3 percent) of students say that ethnic diversity is important, "92.7 percent oppose giving preferences to blacks and Hispanics, favoring fair enrollment instead." Further, four out of five students hold that lowering entrance standards for some students—regardless of the reason—is unfair to other students.

Commenting on the survey, Marc Levin, founder of Students for a Colorblind Society at the University of Texas, Austin, notes that student supporters of racial quotas tend to be more vocal than opponents. "At UT, students backing racial preferences and radical multicultural curricula have occupied buildings and shouted down equal-rights leaders Ward Connerly and David Horowitz," he says. Now, Levin adds, "it is simply no longer possible to pretend that the racial-preference agenda of the loudest and most disruptive students reflects the convictions of the vast majority of their counterparts."

Zogby's poll suggests that new breezes are blowing on American campuses, not only with respect to biased admissions policies but also regarding the nebulous subject of political correctness. Almost 60 percent of the 1,000-odd students surveyed said that there was "too much politics in the classroom and colleges need to rededicate themselves to objectivity and intellectual freedom," while an almost equal percentage said that "there is too much political propaganda, both left-wing and right-wing, in the classroom."

These portents don't mean that affirmative action or political correctness is a thing of the past. Far from it, especially since, according to a recent national survey conducted by the American Council on Education, the left continues to dominate the professorate: only 7 percent of professors in top universities described themselves as conservatives. The results do suggest, however, that a new candor is beginning to make itself felt on campus.

—Roger Kimball

Multiculti Museums—Or Else

The U.K. will cut funds for museums that don't draw minority visitors.

The British government announced in May that it plans to monitor the ethnic composition of visitors to the nation's publicly subsidized museums. Those museums that fail to draw what the government considers a sufficient number of ethnic minorities will lose their subsidies.

Most intelligent people greeted the plan with derision. Surely it's a joke, a belated April Fool's prank? Is the curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum (one of the world's greatest cultural institutions) now expected to sally out with his staff to press-gang passing members of ethnic minorities into his galleries? Will reggae now rumble through Sir John Soane's Museum in an attempt to attract Rastafarians? Will the Ashmolean and the Fitzwilliam install flashing lights and slot machines to broaden their appeal to Chinese gamblers?

Alas, it is no joke. A joke, after all, would require a sense of humor. The Tate Gallery, cravenly submitting to the government's authoritarian directive, is already counting its visitors by race. Other museums will soon follow suit. Curators will do whatever is necessary to keep their jobs.

The government's cultural policy of ethnic monitoring is, of course, the continuation of van-

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dalism by other means. It is the prelude to, and will be the pretext for, the dismantling of the cultural infrastructure of the entire country, an infrastructure it has taken centuries to build: a *sotto voce* Maoist Cultural Revolution.

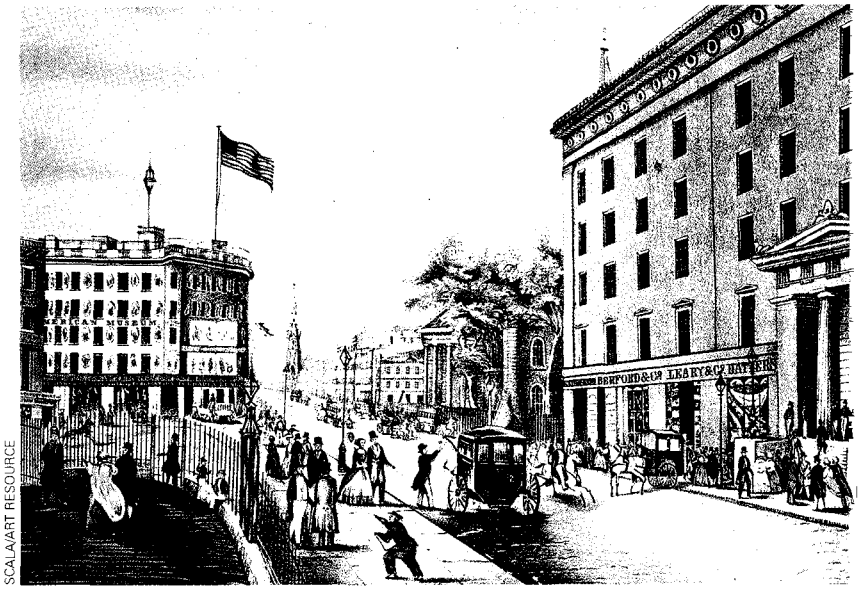
By its directive, the government is effectively declaring that the value of the displays in institutions such as the British Museum or the National Gallery flows solely from the ethnic composition of the public they attract. If the terra cottas of Della Robbia don't interest, say, Sikhs, then—intrinsic artistic value being an empty notion—no reason remains for the government to continue to subsidize their display in the V & A: down they must come and out they must go. From now on, ethnic quota is the measure of all things.

This development represents a striking loss of faith in the value of the culture and civilization that had attracted the ethnic minorities to Britain in the first place, and to which many might make a valuable contribution if encouraged to do so. Significantly, no demand for the ethnic monitoring of cultural institutions has ever emanated from a group claiming to speak for an ethnic minority. The policy is entirely the brainchild of the government.

There is no end to the destruction the policy is capable of wreaking. If we discover—as seems likely—that the audiences at Stratford-on-Avon and at the National Theatre are ethnically homogeneous, does the curtain come down on Shakespeare in the land of his birth?

Far-fetched? Nothing seems far-fetched today in the brave new world of Tony Blair's velvet fascism.

—*Theodore Dalrymple*



SCALA/ART RESOURCE

Broadway, 1840s

The New Blacklist

Opponents of Dr. Laura's defense of traditional morality conjure up an ugly specter.

Once upon a cold war I wrote *A Journal of the Plague Years*, a book about the show-business blacklist. Covering the events of the forties and fifties, I showed how a small, well-organized group of intimidators could destroy livelihoods and sometimes lives. I warned readers to be on their guard: given new political hysteria on the right, the blacklist could happen again. About the recurrence, I was on the money. About the direction, I was all wet.

The original blacklist began after the House Un-American Activities Committee probed Hollywood in 1947. HUAC claimed that the studios overflowed with directors, performers, and scenarists in lockstep with the Communist Party line. Terrified, the Association of Motion Picture Producers announced that it would take action against all "alleged subversive and disloyal elements." Panic spread to radio and TV. Anxious to avoid an investigation, the networks hired private investigators and consulted freelance blacklisters.

The freelancers sold rosters of "subversives," filled with undifferentiated facts and innuendo, and they wrote warning letters to advertisers and networks threatening major disturbances if they used blacklistees. The threats were effective. Making matters even worse was the inability of networks and advertising execs to make distinctions, lumping together the authentic Stalinist with the director who raised money for Russian war relief and the actor who signed a petition to

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integrate baseball. All this sorry business went on until the late fifties, when lawsuits finally put a stop to it.

Fifty years later, most people think the blacklist is as defunct as the Soviet Union. Actually, like Dracula, it has recently risen from the grave with a new thirst for blood. But with this difference: the new blacklisters come from the left. Case in point: the demonization of Dr. Laura Schlessinger.

The broadcaster's most virulent enemies run a website called stopdrlaura.com, subtitled "A Coalition Against Hate." Actually, it's a coalition *for* hate—fulminating, intimidating hate. Why expend so much rage on a radio talk-show hostess? For one reason: Schlessinger, an Orthodox Jew strong on family values and scriptural tradition, used the word "deviant" when referring to some homosexual behavior. She compounded that faux pas by reminding listeners that the Bible doesn't look kindly upon homosexual practices. Plainly, according to the Coalition, this is "hate speech." Ergo the lady must no longer speak on the airwaves.

How best to accomplish this? Why, by the time-honored bombardment of executives and sponsors with phone calls and threatening mail—often sent from the same address. To heat up the intimidation, the Coalition recently listed the addresses and phone numbers of 11 top administrators at Viacom and Paramount, producers of Dr. Laura's show, along with advice to readers: "Message: Cancel Dr. Laura." Advertisers received an open warning: "If Procter and Gamble has bought this show, then it has bought trouble."

P & G got the message. The company withdrew its sponsorship from Dr. Laura's show. United Airlines, AT&T, Xerox, and American Express have since followed suit. Given that Dr. Laura's astronomical ratings indicate that millions of Americans agree with her defense of traditional morality, the executives of these companies were the more craven for taking the course of least resistance, principle be damned. As for the Coalition, it can hardly be blamed for filling the atmosphere with hot air, which helps to steam up the looking glass and cloud the eerily familiar and deeply unflattering image that the mirror reflects. Change "homophobics" to "subversives," and you could swear you were back in the McCarthy era.

—*Stefan Kanfer*

Sanity on Mental Illness

The *New York Times* at last recognizes that, unmedicated, the seriously mentally ill can be dangerous.

For two decades, the politically correct have insisted that the severely mentally ill are no more dangerous than ordinary folks. You see this view emblazoned on subway posters, sponsored by groups like the Mental Health Association: "Mentally Ill Persons Make Good Neighbors." Tipper Gore put the idea front and center in her 1999 White House Conference on Mental Health.

Now along comes the *New York Times*, long the standard-bearer for this psychiatric mantra, to tell us that it just isn't true. In a series on "rampage killers" in April, the paper observed that "more than half" of the 100 multiple homicide killers it studied had "histories of serious mental health problems," including 48 with "some kind of formal diagnosis, often schizophrenia."

In fact, the series made clear the incidence of mental illness among the rampage killers was probably even higher. Most of the 100 killings the *Times* studied, drawn from an FBI database of multiple homicides not related to domestic disputes, gang wars, or robberies or other crimes, had been characterized by observers or cops as "senseless," "random," "sudden," or "crazy"—with crazy clearly being the operative word.

These rampage killings are also growing more frequent. From 1976 to 1989, the *Times* pointed out, such homicides remained relatively constant, at about 23 a year. Between 1990 and 1997, though, the number spiked up 48 percent, to an average of 34.

The *Times* series appeared only four months after the *Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health* noted that stigma against the mentally ill had heightened markedly in recent years, because "the public's perception of mental illness more frequently incorporated violent behavior." In truth, public perception has seen beyond political correctness: stigma has increased, because killings by the seriously mentally ill have increased. Everybody seems to know this now except mental health professionals and their advocacy groups.

To its credit, the *Times* also touched upon the key to reducing the number of rampage killings.

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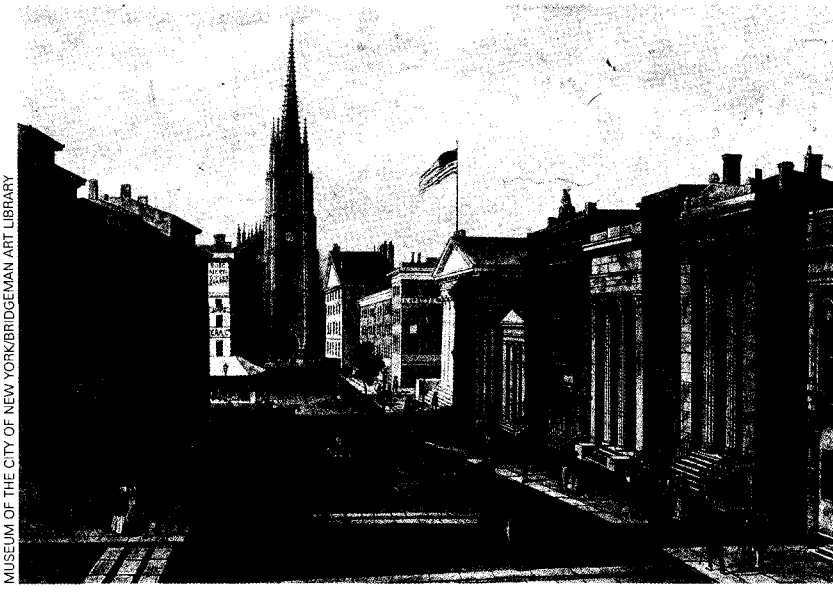
"Of the 24 [killers] who had been prescribed psychiatric drugs," the paper noted, "14 had stopped taking them when they committed their crimes." Numerous studies have documented the relationship between not taking medication for schizophrenia or manic-depressive illness and the propensity to commit violent acts. Most New Yorkers remember Colin Ferguson and Andrew Goldstein as examples of this scenario. Seriously mentally ill individuals who take their medicine are not more dangerous than the general population; those who don't take it are much more dangerous.

In 1999, the *New York Times* unexpectedly—and commendably—endorsed Kendra's Law, enacted by the New York State Legislature last year. Kendra's Law helps keep mentally ill individuals on their meds by allowing courts to require their involuntary return to the hospital if they stop taking them. That the *Times* both endorsed this law and ran the series on rampage killers suggests a sea change in its perception of the seriously mentally ill. Perhaps rational thinking about irrational individuals is at last taking hold as the new century dawns.

—*E. Fuller Torrey*



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Wall Street, 1850

Snuffing Out Illegal Fireworks

How New York won another quality-of-life battle.

Back in 1994, illegal fireworks killed one New Yorker and injured around 100 others. Kids playing with fireworks blew off their fingers, damaged their hearing—and shattered the nerves of their neighbors. On the Fourth of July, 1994, fireworks-related blazes pushed the number of calls to the Fire Department from the usual 90 to 335.

So in 1995 Mayor Giuliani formed the NYPD-FDNY Joint Fireworks Task Force to combat this quality-of-life problem. The operation has succeeded dramatically. In 1995, hospitals reported only 56 injuries due to fireworks, around half the previous year's; last year, the number fell to eight—an 86 percent decline from 1995. Serious fires caused by fireworks also dropped precipitously, from 17 in 1996 to just one last year.

How did the task force do it? Using the same techniques that have driven down the city's murder, auto-theft, and armed-robbery rates: aggressive intelligence gathering, geographically targeted enforcement, and interagency cooperation.

The task force first targeted the most blatant, street-level offenders. They fined stores openly selling fireworks. Chinatown's Canal and Mott Streets were, says Deputy Inspector Michael Brooks of the Joint Fireworks Task Force, "a farmer's market for fireworks," with reported sales of up to $5,000 a day for a single Chinatown vendor. People from all over the tri-state area poured in to purchase expensive—and dangerous—pyrotechnics for their July 4 celebrations.

In addition, the task force went after brazen street hawkers positioned at the mouths of the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, who'd jump into interested shoppers' cars and direct them to their own parked cars, trunks bursting with pyrotechnics. By seizing these street dealers' cars—47 of them in 1996—police quickly drove them out of business.

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The city seized only six cars for fireworks violations in 1997.

Grilling arrestees for information on their suppliers then led cops up the distribution chain. Seizures of fireworks from distributors rocketed upward—from 9,879 cases in 1996 to 27,697 cases in 1997. After the task force depleted the stockpiles of New York City suppliers, distributors in other jurisdictions became targets. Now transformed into a regional fireworks interdiction team—with members from an array of law-enforcement agencies in New York State and New Jersey, as well as from the ATF and the U.S. Customs Service—the task force makes ever-dwindling seizures as far away as Scranton, Pennsylvania.

In 1997, Mayor Giuliani extended his zero tolerance of fireworks to Chinese New Year celebrations in Chinatown, drawing the inevitable charges of cultural insensitivity from the *New York Times*. While it's true that Chinatown's New Year celebration involves only the relatively innocuous "ladyfinger" firecrackers—whose explosions, Chinese tradition has it, help chase away evil spirits—tacit police tolerance even of these Lilliputian explosives before the Giuliani crackdown allowed a remnant of the trade to continue.

Despite protests from a segment of the Chinatown community, the ban should continue, for lax law enforcement in one or two neighborhoods for "culturally sensitive" reasons can export trouble to the entire city.

—Edward John Craig

Who's the Deviant?

The American Psychiatric Association considers whether anyone who disagrees with its rosy view of homosexuality is nuts.

Beginning in the early seventies, when it first declared that homosexuality was not a psychiatric illness but perfectly normal and healthy behavior, the American Psychiatric Association has given its seal of approval to every imaginable form of sexual behavior once considered aberrant or pathological. Last year, for example, the association published a study asserting that pedophilia wasn't a mental disorder—unless the pedophile found himself stressed out by his condition or unable to work or have meaningful relationships. Accordingly, the study suggested we should no longer label adult sex with "willing" pre-teen kids as molestation but instead should call it, more normatively, "adult-child sex."

After a huge public uproar and sharp criticism from some members who excoriated the study's sloppy research, the APA retracted the study (one of the authors of which, it turned out, had previously written for *Paidika*, a pro-pedophilia Danish journal). But the sorry report was in keeping with the APA's entire post-sixties history.

Now the APA seems poised to go beyond merely normalizing what psychiatrists once viewed as abnormal and what ordinary people once considered perverse or immoral. Like the old Soviet Union, the association may be on the verge of making psychiatry serve an even more insidious, politicized, end: discrediting as crazy the views of those who oppose its politics—in this case, its rosy and non-judgmental stance toward homosexuality.

Not too long ago, for example, an APA-approved study, "Is Homophobia Associated With Homosexual Arousal?" argued that people who object to homosexuality in fact have a deep attraction toward it—and presumably need therapy to get over their conflicted feelings. This May in Chicago, further evidence of this troubling trend revealed itself at an APA conference workshop: "Is Homophobia a Mental Illness?"—as indeed the use of the term to describe those who disapprove of homosexuality implies. The politicized tenor of the session revealed itself from the outset, when two of the four male panelists kissed each other on the lips immediately prior to the presentations—exhibiting a provocative attitude toward appropriate professional behavior, if nothing else. To the extent one could glean a definition of homophobia from the confused panelists—as a scientific or theoretical discussion, the session didn't rise above the high school level—it seemed to be simply this: to oppose the agenda of homosexual-rights activism, or even to disapprove of homosexual acts means that one is mentally ill.

Should this view gain further ground, those who embrace traditional values on homosexual behavior better watch out: the men in the white coats will be coming.

—Brian C. Anderson

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Soundings

The NEA's Racket?

Is the nation's biggest teachers' union illegally spending tax-free millions on political campaigns?

The Landmark Legal Foundation has just filed formal complaints against the National Education Association (NEA) with the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Commission. The complaint asks these agencies "to initiate comprehensive investigations" of the NEA's political activities to determine whether it has run afoul of federal tax and campaign laws.

Landmark claims to have extensive evidence that the nation's largest teachers' union uses tax-exempt general revenue to influence the election of candidates seeking public office. The union neither pays income taxes on this revenue nor reports it to the IRS as the Internal Revenue Code requires, Landmark charges. The last several NEA federal tax returns disclose not one penny spent on politics.

This is absurd, of course. The scale of the NEA's political efforts is in fact astounding. "The NEA spends 10 times as much of its budget on political activity ($34.7 million) as on ensuring excellence in public education ($3.3 million) or improving professional standards and working conditions for all education employees ($3 million)," the *Boston Globe* recently observed. In late June, the Associated Press reported that the union has budgeted close to $5 million for the 2000 elections. The union spends these vast sums on getting union-friendly politicians elected and defeating any pols brave enough to challenge the nation's monopolistic system of public education.

In an age when we quibble over the meaning of "is," perhaps the NEA will wiggle away from Landmark's challenge. The official comment from the NEA attorney, Richard Wilkof, makes clear that their response to these allegations hinges on legalisms and not necessarily common sense: "It comes down to a legal question. And that is something that we have taken a position on, that we have disclosed everything properly. And that is what we stand by." But the one thing the NEA may have a hard time escaping from is the growing public realization that teachers' unions are really about money and power, not about improving education.

—Jay P. Greene

A Coda

In England these days, right is wrong, and wrong is right.

I told the story of a young Indian college student of good character who was working in his parents' shop when set upon violently by three youths to whom he had refused to sell beer, suspecting that they were underage (see "Policemen in Wonderland," Spring 2000). In the melee, one of the youths seriously injured his arm when he thrust it through the shop window.

The police charged the ruffians, all with long criminal records, with assault. The three then preposterously alleged that the young Indian had attacked *them*. The police and the prosecutor's office, wanting to appear evenhanded in the eyes of liberals, took the allegation seriously, and charged the young Indian, hitherto of unblemished record, with assault. The prospect of a trial had a profound effect on him, and he tried to kill himself.

The wretched story has a denouement. The prosecution agreed to drop the charges against the young Indian (on the grounds of his mental ill health!) as long as he agreed to drop the charges against his attackers. Relieved at the prospect of putting an end to the whole sad affair, he agreed to this completely unjust proposal. And so the three youths escaped scot-free, with their fully justified contempt for the law further enhanced.

But even in modern England, there is an infraction too far: the three young men now sit in detention, having recently stabbed someone nearly to death in a brawl outside a local nightclub. The authorities' failure to make a proper (and in this case easy) distinction between innocence and guilt, victim and perpetrator, resulted in a decent young man nearly ending his life and in someone else nearly dying from stab wounds. Small wonder that Britain is today the most crime-ridden society in the Western world: for who could either fear or respect a criminal justice system such as this?

—Theodore Dalrymple

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America's Best Urban Police Force

Yes, it's the NYPD, despite all the disinformation spread by Al Sharpton and the *New York Times*. Here's the proof.

Heather Mac Donald

I'm on what I think is a routine ride-along in Flatbush with Officers Peter Morales and John Ferretti, when the police radio crackles: "Shots fired at 3102 Foster Ave." As we screech to a halt in front of a big red apartment complex, Morales and Ferretti rush into the building and run up to the roof. "Police, don't move," they yell at a man scuttling down the fire escape. He dives into a sixth-floor apartment and empties his .357 Magnum out the window at the pursuing Morales. As the shots ping off the metal near him, Morales holds his fire: he doesn't have a clear shot that wouldn't endanger civilians. "I'm being fired on," he screams into his radio. Sirens blaring, a battalion of cars and vans roars up; cops of every description spill out; a helicopter buzzes overhead.

Inside, accused drug dealer Ricki Elam, 27, throws his gun into the oven and runs into his aunt's apartment next door, police allege, surprising her with a man friend. Elam rips off his do-rag and shirt, the cops later tell me, revealing a different-colored shirt below, and tries to sneak away in the commotion. But the cops coming up the stairs recognize him despite the costume change and collar him. The charges: attempted murder of a police officer, burglary, illegal gun possession—on top of his already pending drug charges and a gun charge.

This is a typical police story that you'll never find in the New York press. Capturing a gun-wielding felon without firing a shot—as police have done 155 times since 1995—doesn't fit the orthodox profile of a trigger-happy police force. Nor will New Yorkers ever hear about the collaboration between residents of this Brooklyn building and their local precinct to drive dope dealers out of the complex, or about the vocal support for cops I heard in the neighborhood. These facts contradict the preferred narrative of an isolated, racially biased force that scorns community involvement.

The press—led by the *New York Times*—along with criminologists, law professors, and activists, most of whom have never bothered studying the NYPD, has spun a distorted, error-ridden revisionist history of New York's crime revolution. Its harm extends well beyond New York, giving anti-police activists elsewhere ammunition to oppose the Gotham-style reforms that are any city's best hope for reducing crime. The basic story—which I've cobbled together here from Fox Butterfield's annual anti-NYPD article in the *New York Times*, other *Times* articles, a recent Jeffrey Rosen *New Republic* piece, stories in the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Economist*, and conversations with various academics—goes like this:

In the pre-Giuliani Golden Age, Mayor David Dinkins inaugurated "early and successful experiments in community policing" (Butterfield), which Mayor Giuliani mysteriously junked in favor of brute force. Giuliani's NYPD simply "thr[e]w people at the problems" (Butterfield), rather than think strategically about problem solving. *Other* cities' police departments reached out to the clergy, listened to the community to learn its concerns, and made "citizens the allies of the police" (Butterfield). Not the NYPD.

The Giuliani-NYPD strategy centered on the tiny undercover Street Crime Unit, which Butterfield and Rosen think is Giuliani's creation, though it dates from the 1970s. The Unit stops and frisks vast numbers of innocent people, declare the revisionists, hoping to net an occasional illegal gun or fugitive. By

Detective David Yat patrols Chinatown's 5th Precinct.

Photographs by Harvey Wang

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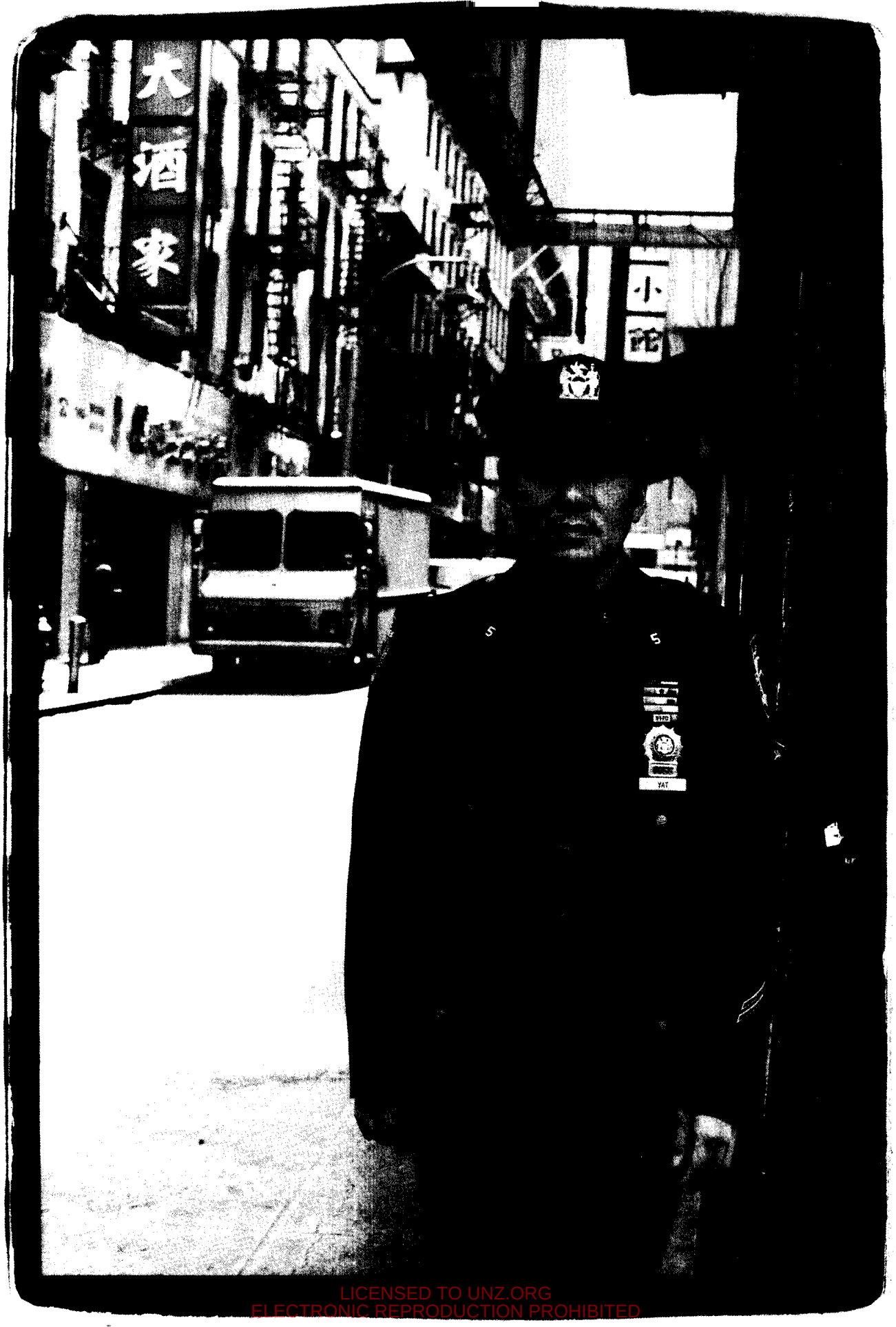

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contrast, *other* departments require their "officers to have a reasonable suspicion before stopping a subject" (*The Economist*). Meanwhile, the rest of the NYPD enforces a mindless "zero tolerance" policy regarding petty crime and quality-of-life offenses. Officers and precinct commanders have lost all "discretion" regarding where and when to enforce the law (Rosen)—though, even so, they concentrate discriminatorily on minorities (Rosen).

The results: the bullet-ridden bodies of Amadou Diallo, an innocent Guinean immigrant killed by the Street Crime Unit outside his Bronx apartment on February 4, 1999, and Patrick Dorismond, an innocent Haitian shot by an undercover narcotics officer during a midtown altercation on March 16, 2000. When not actually shooting unarmed citizens, the NYPD has been creating a legacy of "fear" (Butterfield), evidenced in spiraling civilian complaints.

Almost nothing in this account is accurate. Let's deconstruct it and get to the truth:

MYTH 1: COMMUNITY POLICING WAS SUCCESSFUL UNDER MAYOR DINKINS AND HIS COMMISSIONER, LEE BROWN.

With almost as many definitions of "community policing" as there are police forces, hardly a department in the country doesn't claim to be doing it. But the core ideas are: an attention to local conditions, especially quality-of-life problems, rather than just the big felonies; an effort to solve the underlying causes of particular problems; working with local residents and with other government agencies to respond to crime and disorder. In the public's mind, community policing also taps nostalgia for the tough but friendly beat cop who knew everyone in the neighborhood and kept them in line with a sharp word.

Under Mayor Dinkins, Commissioner Lee Brown aimed to flood New York with highly visible beat cops, who would be local problem solvers, community organizers, and liaisons to other agencies. In reality, poorly trained young foot patrolmen wandered aimlessly over their territory, without knowing what they were supposed to be doing. "The only clear thing about the mission in those days was the beat book," recalls Patrick Harnett, then division commander in the Bronx. Officers abandoned their beats to waste two hours a day in the station house, recording the community meetings they attended and community contacts they made that day. The area each cop was supposed to cover was so vast that some neighborhoods never saw their community-policing officer at all. The cops themselves often joined the program because they could set their own schedule—which somehow always ended up 8:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday.

Commanders in the city's highest-crime neighborhoods soon saw that Brown's community-policing idea was simply the wrong program at the wrong time. "There were 2,200 homicides a year, and cops were devoting hours to cleaning up junkyards," recalls former chief of department Louis Anemone, then a Bronx division commander. "It was sad." Says Harnett: "Brown's community policing used the social worker model at a time when Rome was burning."

MYTH 2: THE NYPD JUNKED COMMUNITY POLICING AND STARTED MERELY "THROWING OFFICERS" AT CRIME.

If a key component of community policing is problem solving, New York's internationally heralded Compstat process, developed by Anemone and Jack Maple in 1994, is the most refined community-policing program around, in sharp contrast with Commissioner Brown's unfocused efforts. The twice-weekly Compstat meetings, in which top department brass grill precinct commanders about crime in their precincts with the aid of computerized crime maps, are nothing other than high-pressure problem-solving sessions. In them, for the first time, the department's chiefs and local commanders began sharing information and bringing all the department's intellectual resources to bear on problems. "People were amazed at the resulting creativity," recalls the Kennedy School of Government's Frank Hartman, who was a consultant to the NYPD at the time. "Arrests were not the criterion, but rather: have you solved the problem?" By the end of 1994, district attorneys, U.S. attorneys, probation and parole officers, and federal agents were attending Compstat meetings to share information and coordinate crime fighting.

Giuliani's first police commissioner, William Bratton, reproduces a typical Jack Maple Compstat interrogation in his book, *Turnaround*: "I want to know why those shootings are still happening in that housing project! What have we done to stop it? Did we hand out fliers to everybody? . . . Did we run a warrant check on every address at every project, and did we relentlessly pursue those individuals? . . . What are

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we doing with parole violators? Of the 964 people on parole in the 75th Precinct, do we know the different administrative restrictions on each one, so when we interview them we can hold it over their heads? And if not, why?" While the NYPD's critics praise *other* cities' departments for such things as targeted warrant checks, parole crackdowns, and interagency collaboration, New York's innovations led the field in just those areas.

Far from "throwing people at problems," the NYPD used Compstat to target its resources with pinpoint accuracy—even building by building. Commanders could direct quality-of-life enforcement at shooting hot spots, knowing that they'd pick up gun toters that way. With similar strategic thinking, Bratton directed officers to pursue all accomplices in gun crimes, to seek out suppliers, and to ask all arrestees where to get guns in the city. Police had estimated that there were as many as 2 million illegal guns in New York when Bratton took command, but by August 1995, the proportion of arrested suspects toting guns was 39 percent lower than in 1993, because people were afraid to carry.

"New York's heralded Compstat process is the most refined community-policing program around."

The results were unprecedented—anywhere. Crime dropped 12 percent in 1994, compared with 1.1 percent in the rest of country. Homicides fell 19.8 percent, compared with 5 percent nationally. For each of the next six years, crime continued its freefall.

Remarkably, NYPD critics object that Compstat is not real "problem solving." According to naysayer Rana Sampson, a police consultant in San Diego and an inevitable Fox Butterfield source, Compstat policing relies on police "bodies," not "brains." Its analytic time frame is too short. Real problem solving, Sampson and others say, corrects the underlying environmental conditions that lead to crime, rather than simply enforcing the way to public safety.

The ideal type of problem solving that such critics envision would have been wildly irrelevant for 1990s New York. Emeritus law professor Herman Goldstein, the original theorist of "problem-oriented policing" and another frequent Butterfield source, describes a typical problem-solving project he is overseeing: a "very penetrating academic study" of thefts from vehicles in parking structures in Charlottesville, Virginia (population: 40,000, the size of the NYPD; homicides in 1998: one). For each parking facility, he is making an "in-depth study of physical design, the quality of the fencing, lighting, whether there are attendants on duty, and whether they are paid." To do the study well will take a "long time." Eventually, Goldstein hopes to establish whether, for example, the highest-risk facilities are less well fenced. Then, he says, "we can play around with altering the conditions to decrease the theft."

New York's problems could not wait for "penetrating academic studies." As Jack Maple replied, when accused of being too adversarial in the Compstat sessions: "I don't have time to be nice." I asked Goldstein whether facing several thousand murders a year creates a sense of urgency that cannot afford lengthy academic studies. And with gun violence, for example, what is there to study other than precisely what Compstat targeted: the sources of illegal guns, the networks of suppliers and users? "New York is entirely different," Goldstein admits. "With violent crime, the primary need can be police expertise, but you still need community members to come forward." Too bad he didn't tell Fox Butterfield that.

Though dedicated to problem solving, Bratton explicitly rejected the idea that the beat cop should be the main neighborhood problem solver. No green recruit could take on the problems of a complex Gotham neighborhood, he said. Bratton's problem solvers were the savvy, experienced precinct commanders, whom he unflaggingly held accountable for results. He also discarded the promise of a cop on every block, instead concentrating patrolmen on commercial avenues and at transportation hubs, where crime actually happened.

Finally, he rejected the standard rhetoric of the community partnering with the police to solve crime, at least violent crime. Bratton's policing—and his

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successor, Howard Safir's—is unapologetically expert-driven. The citizen's role is to provide information to the cops, help set priorities, and obey the rules—though the police do have continuous contacts with their constituents. But New York never created a formal apparatus of citywide citizen crime-solving meetings, as have other cities. "If your crime problem is big and violent," says Northwestern University political science professor Wesley Skogan, the nation's foremost academic expert in community policing, "citizens should stay home." Citizens are "good at clean-up," he says, such as nuisance abatement and beautification. But for coming up with tactics to take out a drug gang, that's for the police.

MYTH 3: THE NEW YORK POLICE ARE NOT INVOLVED WITH THE COMMUNITY.

Try telling that to residents of a Model Block in Far Rockaway—part of a high-intensity police program to push criminals out of some of the most crime- and drug-ridden blocks in the city. I asked a group of Model Block mothers how they would change the NYPD. Blank silence. Then one woman volunteered: "We don't have no problems. The police respond immediately. They listen immediately to community concerns." Do these mothers read the reports of police harassment? "Every day; but thank God, where I live, we don't have it," the same woman answered. "I don't believe the reports," another said. "They want attention, that's the way I see it." What about Al Sharpton? "Al Sharpton doesn't speak for us," a third said. "He doesn't come to Far Rockaway. Our precinct is more like family than a precinct; our officers spend more time in the community than at home."

In precincts throughout the city, commanding officers attend community and church meetings almost daily. Says Jean-Pierre Louis, who runs an umbrella organization of Haitian community groups and churches in Flatbush: "The police are definitely willing to listen at a local level. We don't have any problem." Father Joseph Weber, pastor of the Holy Innocents Church in the 70th Precinct, where Abner Louima was assaulted, says that "churches in Flatbush have an active positive relation with their precincts. The commanders are very sensitive to our needs. But that is not what most people want to hear," he adds sardonically.

In the 77th Precinct in Crown Heights, where two and a half days of violent rioting occurred under Mayor Dinkins, cops reach out to kids, taking them rollerskating, coaching them, attending youth meetings and talent shows, and opening up the precinct's computers to children after school. Many officers spend Christmas giving out toys to hospitalized kids. In the Bronx's 43rd Precinct (where Amadou Diallo was shot), Detective Elliot Parisi can't stop talking about the teens he mentors in the Boy Scouts. "I can't begin to express how much those kids mean to me," he tells me. "You gotta see the beauty in these kids' hearts."

Though the department doesn't trumpet the rhetoric of community problem solving, community-police collaborations happen all the time. In a typical operation, the 67th Precinct's commander, Deputy Inspector Harry Wedin, is working with "all the good people who want to take back" the building where Officer Morales was shot at on my ride-along. He urged the landlord to post NO TRESPASSING signs throughout the complex, which cops enforce vigorously. He deputized residents to call in drug activity. Undercover officers were mapping the building's entire drug operation until an officer got shot. Too "enforcement-oriented," as community-policing purists would charge? What is the department supposed to do? Cops can't "reengineer" a massive, 70-year-old apartment complex to "reduce opportunities" for dealing; they can't spend months studying lighting or fencing, when the real problem is an infestation of criminals.

None of these local interactions gets reported, because the New York press almost never covers precincts—which is where the most positive police-community work occurs—unless something goes dreadfully wrong. The one time in recent memory that the *New York Times* wrote about a positive precinct event, it inoculated it with a strong dose of hatred toward the police.

In June 1999, the paper made it out to the 71st Precinct's fifth annual community picnic, featuring pony rides, cops flipping hamburgers, and lots of warm feelings toward the police. That is not, however, how the paper chose either to open or to end the story. Instead, after briefly and ironically presenting the scene through the eyes of the precinct commander ("a world that looked sunny and fine"), the *Times* gave voice to a sour onlooker, Gordon Franklin, 32, a road manager for the rap group

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Detective Mark Turetsky of Brooklyn's 66th Precinct visits a grocery store in Borough Park.

Gangstarr. "It's propaganda," he spits out angrily.

Now what is Gangstarr? The *Times* doesn't say, but it is a group known for its anti-white lyrics. Its former lead singer, "GURU," once broke a beer bottle on a woman's head, smacked her in the face, held her at gunpoint, wounded and bleeding, and refused to drive her to the hospital. Reason: she had pointed out his hypocrisy in dating white women while bashing whites in his songs. One might guess that Franklin shares his group's racial outlook, since he immediately invokes Louis Farrakhan: how would the police be behaving, he asks accusingly, "if this were a Louis Farrakhan event?"

Only after getting Franklin's perspective do we hear from the picnic participants, who swear that police-community relations are much improved in Crown Heights since the 1991 riots. Just so the reader doesn't come away with the wrong impression, the *Times* makes sure to end the article with Franklin. Pointing his finger at the white precinct commander, who is standing nearby with his back turned, Franklin blurts out "in a moment of bitter anger": "You know, my feeling is I'd knock him out."

Now maybe Franklin is a fine, upstanding member of the community, who hates the police because they have so abused innocent him. More likely, he represents a breed of professional cop-haters who profit from fomenting more hatred of the police. For the *Times*, however, he is a valid barometer of community opinion, and his is the message that lingers.

Could the police do more outreach? Of course. And the more they do, the more goodwill they will create. But they also have to maintain public safety. After all, in the Lee Brown era, a Bronx borough chief remembers, "cops were shaking everyone's hand but not getting anything accomplished."

MYTH 4: THE NYPD HAS CREATED A "CLIMATE OF FEAR."

It is a staple of NYPD reporting that people now fear the police more than criminals. Without any effort, I found examples aplenty of the opposite.

Natasha, a petite 20-year-old with long dark hair tumbling out of a head scarf, watches the police cordon off the building where Ricki Elam allegedly shot at Officer Morales. "They say cops are bad, but they put their lives on the line," she says decisively. "They're not here to harass you; they're here to protect you. Ordinary people don't help you like that."

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Three boys walk past; one snarls "bastards" in the direction of some officers nearby. "He needs to get his little ass into school," Natasha retorts.

It's the criminals who worry her, not the cops. "This whole complex is filled with bad people," she says, "people who sell guns to teenagers, dealers in each building who have 13-year-olds buying drugs for them. I've seen everything." When Natasha observes a crime, she calls the police. "I could get killed for that," she reflects.

Round-cheeked Robert, 13, was on his way to get a haircut with his little sister when the shooting started. He seconds Natasha's views. "We can't wait to get out of here; it's too scary." Do the police harass you? I ask. "I think it's good that they stop people," says Robert, an Explorer Scout. "The police should be stricter."

There is a huge reservoir of support for the NYPD, as easily accessible to a reporter as the hostility that alone gets covered. Even some people caught up in the enforcement system are good-natured about the police. Vladimir Lamarre is sitting on a bench in Brooklyn's 67th Precinct waiting to speak to a detective; a "lady" had accused him of bad-mouthing her in Creole. What does he think about the police? "They're all right," says the 25-year-old city parks worker. "Once you don't do any trouble, you don't get any problem." Do they treat you politely? "Yeah."

The point is, one could as easily write an NYPD story filled with people like Natasha as one filled with people like Gangstarr's Gordon Franklin. Which would be correct? Polls suggest that there are more Natashas out there than Gordon Franklins, and that—until the Louima, Diallo, and Dorismond incidents—support for the NYPD was rising under the Giuliani-Bratton regime. In the spring of 1996, an Empire State Survey found that 73 percent of New Yorkers had a positive view of police, compared with 37 percent in June 1992. By 1998, a federal Bureau of Justice Statistics survey showed 84 percent of New Yorkers age 16 and older satisfied with the police, including a surprisingly high 77 percent of black New Yorkers. But most New Yorkers experience the police primarily through the press, and for the last year or more the press has relentlessly told them only one story.

Plenty of anti-cop sentiment existed before the Giuliani era, of course, and when Bratton-Safir policing actually began enforcing the law vigorously, some people came to dislike the police more intensely, as family members or neighbors got arrested. Fanned by the Al Sharpton–*New York Times* winds, their anti-police feelings burned all the hotter.

And neighborhoods of people who feel this way make the NYPD's job harder. "Last Saturday night, a 23-year-old boy was shot and killed," a squad commander in Brooklyn tells me bitterly, by way of illustration. "His friends were with him; everyone knows who killed him. The only person who cared was the mother. I asked her to tell his friends to come and help solve the murder. She asked them, but they refused—his best friends. So I try to find them. One takes off, running. I'm chasing the kid, and people are blocking me. If the community really cared, I'd solve every murder. The community's only 'the community' when they want to trash the police. I attend every wake, I embrace every victim of crime, do whatever I can to solve the pain, and the rest of the community stays away. No one cares." Sums up crime strategist Jack Maple: "If we could get 'the community' to press charges and show up in court, we'd be batting a home run."

MYTH 5: QUALITY-OF-LIFE ENFORCEMENT IS DISCRIMINATORY.

In a remarkably misinformed *New Republic* cover story last April, Georgetown law professor Jeffrey Rosen suggests that quality-of-life enforcement discriminates against minorities, because poverty forces them to conduct more of their life, including vice, outdoors. He should listen to Luz, from 139th Street in Harlem. The police enforce a lower standard of community civility above 110th Street, where Harlem begins, than below, she complains. "Sometimes the struggle is: do the police take quality-of-life issues seriously enough?" she says. "Let's say someone wants to barbecue in the middle of Broadway. The police's attitude is: 'Maybe it's legal.'"

A bleeding heart like Rosen would argue that of course it should be legal. Where else will these poor outdoor chefs go? Luz's attitude is: they're encroaching on *our* common public space, blowing smoke in *our* windows; cart them off. There are no more insistent advocates of order-maintenance policing than the law-abiding residents of dangerous neighborhoods like Luz. And there are many thousands of them.

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Community-policing theorists insist that cops must understand how intensely citizens care about the raucous kids or intimidating beggars on their own corner—more even than about felony reduction. But Giuliani's NYPD needed no coaching on that front. One of its earliest crime strategies, "Reclaiming the Public Spaces of New York," targeted "street prostitution, aggressive panhandlers, sales of alcohol to minors, graffiti vandalism, public urination, unlicensed peddlers, reckless bicyclists, and earsplitting noise churned out by 'boom box' cars, loud motorcycles, clubs, and spontaneous street parties." When it comes to responding to community priorities—the keystone of community policing—the NYPD was way ahead of the game.

"In 1984, citizens lodged one excessive-force complaint per every seven officers; in 1999, one per every 19."

MYTH 6: THE STREET CRIME UNIT AND "STOPPING AND FRISKING" ARE THE VERY ESSENCE OF GIULIANI'S NYPD.

Talk to the architects of New York's anticrime revolution, and the Street Crime Unit never comes up. Nor does stopping and frisking. Yet this tiny unit—less than 1 percent of the city's force—has become the centerpiece of the revisionist history, because four of its members shot Amadou Diallo. And the revisionists portray stopping and frisking as the NYPD's main (and illegitimate) weapon against crime.

In fact, the essence of Giuliani crime-busting is the unprecedented gathering of crime intelligence through the Compstat process, the rigorous follow-up, and the accountability for commanders. It is debriefing all suspects about any unsolved crimes and investigating every shooting as seriously as a murder. It is interagency cooperation. To be sure, officers are instructed to question people stopped for minor offenses, and to arrest and search parole violators, repeat offenders, and wanted persons. This too is part of modern policing's intelligence-gathering strategy.

Cops report that in 1998 they did 138,887 stop and frisks, 85 percent of them on blacks and Hispanics—less than the 89 percent of suspects identified as black and Hispanic by victims. Assuming that police stopped mostly young men, and that they stopped everybody just once, that would mean that they stopped 11.6 percent of all minority males between ten and 45. But press reports insist again and again that the police are stopping the same people numerous, even dozens, of times. Assuming, very conservatively, three stop and frisks per person, that amounts to 3.8 percent of this group—hardly a rampage, and less than the 6 percent of young men that criminologists estimate commit much of the city's crime. The press specializes in blissfully ignorant innuendos about stop and frisks to tar the NYPD. In a 1999 article unfavorably comparing the NYPD with the Boston Police Department, *The Economist* pointed out portentously that after 1989, Boston required its police to have a "reasonable suspicion" before stopping a suspect. Implication: New York has no such requirement. Well, if Boston waited until 1989 to promulgate that rule, it was sure getting lousy legal advice. The "reasonable suspicion" requirement has been in place since 1968, thanks to a Supreme Court opinion justifying stop and frisks. New York follows that requirement no less than Boston.

MYTH 7: BRATTON-SAFIR STYLE POLICING ENCOURAGES BRUTALITY.

Revisionists sounded this theme early. In April 1995, David Dinkins absurdly complained to *Newsday* that Bratton and Giuliani "seem to care more about 'kicking ass' than increasing the peace." New York University law professor Paul Chevigny opined to the *Los Angeles Times* late in 1995 that Giuliani's crime-fighting strategies contain the seeds of police violence. "The military analogy leads to brutality. The military is brutal," he warned darkly.

Here are the facts. Complaints of excessive police force have plunged since former mayor Ed Koch's time, though Koch is now a full-throated member of the anti-NYPD chorus. In 1984, citizens lodged one excessive-force complaint per every seven officers; in 1995, one per every 10; in 1999, one per every 19.

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The actual use of force has followed an identical pattern. The number of intentional shootings by the police dropped over 50 percent from 1993 to 1999—while the department grew nearly 40 percent. Fatal shootings by police officers in 1999—11—were at the lowest level since 1973. Compare that number with the nine fatal shootings in 1999 by San Diego's 2,064 sworn officers—a whopping rate of nearly five per 1,000 cops. The rate of fatal shootings per 1,000 officers in New York is .28, compared with .96 in Chicago—home of the most extensive community-policing experiment in the country; 1.14 in Washington, D.C.; and 1.68 in Houston, presided over by Mayor Lee Brown, New York mayor Dinkins's former police commissioner.

To be sure, overall civilian complaints against the police rose in 1994 and 1995, as Giuliani increased the force by 23.6 percent and directed it to start enforcing the law vigorously. But from 1995 to 1999, civilian complaints per officer declined 22 percent, and they went down over 10 percent more in the first four months of 2000. The department's incessant training in civilian relations seems to be paying off.

Early in the Bratton regime, Chief Patrick Kelleher built up the relatively toothless Internal Affairs Bureau, tasked with rooting out police corruption and brutality, into the most elite of all the NYPD's departments. Giuliani's and Safir's response to the Louima torture—basically cleaning out an entire precinct—was unprecedented in its harshness and swiftness. Bratton publicly humiliated members of the 30th Precinct found to have stolen from victims and suspects. Safir has fired more officers for misconduct than the previous two commissioners combined. Two tragic shootings over six years and one undisputed act of brutality hardly show a force out of control. All departments make mistakes, usually without such relentless criticism as has engulfed the NYPD; but then, those departments are not headed by a mayor who is anathema to the liberal establishment.

MYTH 8: NEW YORK COULD HAVE SOLVED ITS CRIME AND COMMUNITY-RELATIONS PROBLEMS BY MODELING ITSELF ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

If only we had policed like _____ (insert your favorite city), lament the revisionists, we could have achieved our extraordinary crime drops without police killings and community friction. No city is too small, none has a demographic or a crime profile too wildly dissimilar from New York's, to serve as an accusatory foil. The *Times*'s Butterfield ludicrously holds up Fort Wayne, Indiana—population: 200,000, a little larger than a large New York City precinct—as a useful model. Fort Wayne, he tells us, divided itself into 227 neighborhoods, each with a liaison officer to other city agencies. Following that model would require dividing New York, absurdly, into 8,286 community-policing neighborhoods. Fort Wayne cut murders by 50 percent from 1994 to 1998, says Butterfield sharply, but incorrectly. Actually, it lowered homicides 36 percent, from 38 in 1994 to 24 in 1998. Well, New York lowered murders 59 percent, from 1,561 to 633.

The comparisons always supposedly show that "community policing" fueled these other departments' success. Somehow, community-policing failures never get trumpeted. Take Chicago, whose community-policing program, the country's most long-standing, Butterfield improbably puts forth as a "thriving" model. In fact, Chicago has done a lackluster job of both crime reduction and community relations. While New York cut its crime rate 44 percent from 1994 to 1999, Chicago reduced its crime rate just 18.6 percent. New York decreased murders 65 percent from 1990 to 1997, compared with Chicago's 10 percent. The crime rate per capita remains 225 percent higher in Chicago than in New York; with half Gotham's population, the Windy City has about the same number of murders annually.

Whereas 84 percent of New Yorkers age 16 and older were satisfied with the police in 1998, only 80 percent of Chicagoans were. More black New Yorkers (77 percent) than black Chicagoans (69 percent) approved of the police. Police shootings produce the same charges of rampant racism in Chicago as in New York.

Getting Chicagoans to show up at beat meetings, wherein the community and the police are supposed to solve problems jointly, remains a continuing challenge. Even Mayor Richard Daley, who inaugurated community policing with great fanfare in 1993, no longer seems so enthusiastic about it. As a Chicago lieutenant, quoted by Northwestern's Wes Skogan, put it, "The spark has gone out."

Detective Victor Mendoza of the 33rd Precinct in Washington Heights.

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Baltimore is an even more cautionary community-policing flop. Ex-police commissioner Thomas Frazier used to brag that his force was the only gang in town that could save a child, run a recreation center, and get an addict into treatment, according to the *Baltimore Sun*. He had assigned 88 officers to the indisputably worthy Police Athletic League but only five to tracking down the 50,000 suspects loose on arrest warrants. He effectively decriminalized drug possession.

The results? Baltimore's per-capita homicide rate, fourth in the nation in 1999, was seven times the national average and five times New York's. Baltimore ranked first nationally in robbery, fourth in assault, and tenth in rape. Its cops shot civilians at four times the rate of New York's officers. Drug dealers had become so shameless that they refused to move when asked by a police officer.

Martin O'Malley won the mayoralty in this predominantly black city last year by promising zero tolerance for crime. He brought in New York's Jack Maple to sketch out the sort of smart, information-based policing that drove down Gotham's crime, and he recently tapped Edward Norris, the NYPD's deputy commissioner for operations, as commissioner. Thanks to the constant misinformation about New York–style policing in the New York and national press, Norris faces a public-relations struggle to give Baltimore the policing it needs.

Chicago and Baltimore are not rare exceptions. A 1994 study of 11 community-policing experiments found a mere 50 percent success rate. Worse, as of 1997, only one of the 11 projects had survived. Political scientist Skogan cautions that the limited scope of documented evidence so far makes community policing vulnerable to the charge that "it is mostly a public-relations triumph."

Instead of ever mentioning places like these, NYPD-bashers usually cite San Diego and Boston to disparage New York. Like New York, these cities have had astounding and comparable crime drops since the 1990s, and they vie with Gotham for first place nationally, depending when you start counting and what you measure. The *Times*'s Butterfield picks 1991 to 1998, when the murder rate dropped 76.4 percent in San Diego, 70.6 percent in New York, and 69.3 percent in Boston. Measure from 1990, however, and New York's 72 percent murder-rate drop edges out San Diego's 71 percent, while Boston tops both, at 75 percent. Measure from 1994, Giuliani's first year in office, to 1999—and look at all FBI index crimes, not just homicide—and New York leads not just all three but all big cities, with a 44 percent crime-rate drop. San Diego is in third place nationally at 38.6 percent and Boston in fourth place at 34.5 percent. Even after the reduction, though, Boston's crime rate remains 40 percent higher than New York's.

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Police Officer Nivrose Duncan of the 67th Precinct surveys Nostrand Avenue in Brooklyn.

Clearly, all three cities deserve enormous credit. But where did they start from? In 1993, the year before Giuliani took office, San Diego, with a murder rate a mere two-fifths that of New York, had 133 killings; Boston, with a murder rate two-thirds that of New York, had 98 killings. New York had 1,946. Clearly, New York was facing a much larger problem. Bringing down nearly 2,000 murders 67 percent, as New York did through 1998, requires preventing 1,313 homicides (not to mention all the lives saved in the intervening years), 14 times as many as the 91 homicides San Diego fended off to bring its murders down to 42 in 1998.

The people most closely involved in the three cities' successes scoff at comparing them. "This is why I get aggravated with criminologists and reporters like Butterfield," says William Bratton, hardly a defender of New York's current policing. "They do reports from each other." As Boston's police commissioner, Bratton began that

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city's community-policing efforts before Giuliani recruited him to head the NYPD. "We did things very differently in Boston, because it is a different city. As for San Diego, it has nowhere near the density of New York. It's not teeming with people. It has a different population mix and a higher income level."

San Diego has embraced the Goldsteinian problem-solving method to great effect. Working with residents, beat officers analyze the preconditions of crime, above all property crime, and try to prevent recurrence. But this mostly non-minority, affluent, beach-side paradise, with a population 16 percent that of New York's, has never had a serious crime problem. It has never had gun violence to speak of, says Al Guaderrema of the San Diego Police's Crime Prevention Unit. And it has benefited enormously from the Border Patrol's crackdown on the San Diego–Mexico border over the last several years. San Diego's "most difficult crime situation in the last eight years has been thefts from autos and auto thefts," he says—a far cry from New York's gorgeous mosaic of felonies. "What works in San Diego wouldn't work in New York," says John Welter, San Diego's Assistant Chief of Policy and Planning. "Broken windows needed addressing in New York," he says, but not in San Diego, which has never had that degree of street disorder. Similarly, San Diego could come the closest of any big city to driving authority and discretion down to the beat cop level because its force is a manageable 2,000 men, not Gotham's 40,000. (Nevertheless, recall that San Diego police fatally shoot civilians at 15 times the rate of the NYPD.)

Journalism 101

Want to be a star reporter for the *New York Times*? Worried about the pressure to come up with new material? Don't worry! Follow the Fox Butterfield method of journalism and cut new research to a minimum. Simply recycle your material annually, sprinkle on a few new errors each year, and quote experts unqualified to pass judgment on the subject.

For the last two years, Fox Butterfield, the *Times*'s national crime reporter, has criticized the NYPD for not policing like other cities. On April 4, 1999, while New York was still convulsed with the *Times*-led Diallo frenzy, Butterfield announced that "New York City has grimly discovered there is a price for the tough law enforcement tactics that have led to its steep drop in crime: estrangement between police and citizens." New York's fatal error, he claimed, was in abandoning community policing. He proceeded to trot out a handful of cities—above all, San Diego—that he claimed had used community policing to achieve crime drops comparable with New York's while improving community relations.

Exactly 11 months later, during the controversy over the Patrick Dorismond police shooting, Butterfield dusted off last year's article and reran it. Oh sure, he added some new cities and exacerbated the error-ridden caricature of the NYPD, but the basic tale was the same:

1999, admiringly quoting San Diego police chief Jerry Sanders: "Our basic premise is: we don't have enough police officers to do it all, so we need community participation."

2000, quoting Chief Sanders again: "Our basic premise was, we didn't have enough police officers to do it all, so we needed the participation by the community."

1999: Sanders "measures progress as much by an annual survey of public satisfaction with the police as by the actual reduction in the crime rate. The most recent survey . . . showed approval at 89%, he said."

2000: "In addition to using crime figures, Mr. Sanders decided to measure his department's success with an annual survey of public satisfaction. The most recent one showed approval at 89%, he said."

1999: "Based on the ideas of residents themselves, the police divided the city into 99 neighborhoods, with a police team assigned to each."

2000: "After a series of meetings with citizens, the police divided the city into 99 neighborhoods, with a police team assigned to each."

1999: "San Diego has only 1.7 officers per 1,000 residents, compared with 5 per 1,000 in New York City."

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1999: "Another component in community

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Boston is another great success story, but also one of difficult application to New York, say its prime architects. "The cities are in completely different scales," observes Captain Robert Dunford, who heads a precinct in the Dorchester neighborhood. With 550,000 people, Boston is half the size of San Diego and less than one-quarter the size of Brooklyn. And its own leaders are quick to acknowledge the NYPD's accomplishments. "New York was an exemplar in the Bratton era," says Jim Jordan, the Boston Police Department's director of strategic planning. "We learned accountability from New York."

In the early 1990s, Boston's chief crime problem was highly specific: youth gangs were shooting each other up, mostly in three small neighborhoods with a combined adult population of 104,000. Police estimated that only 150 to 250 kids were committing most of the city's violent crime.

The Boston cops, therefore, could develop a sharply focused strategy. In partnership with federal prosecutors, they gave gang members an ultimatum: use a gun, even just get caught with one bullet, and you're doing federal time—big. Taking a cue from New York, the police directed quality-of-life enforcement at the gangs. And most famously, the police and a small group of minority ministers—the Ten-Point Coalition, led by the charismatic Eugene Rivers—began collaborating on preventing youth violence. Teams of police and ministers visited schools and homes sending the message: stay out of trouble or pay the price.

Attend a Wednesday morning meeting of the Ten-Point Coalition at the elegant olive Victorian

policing is 1,200 volunteers, many of them retired people who receive police training, wear police-like uniforms, and drive around in official vehicles."

2000: "The city also recruited 1,200 volunteers, many of them retired. . . . [T]hey receive police training, wear police-like uniforms, and drive official vehicles."

Butterfield also has his favorite criminologists, some of whom have either total recall or a limited vocabulary:

1999: "Rana Sampson, a former police sergeant in the city, who is director of public safety for the University of San Diego, said: 'What NYPD did was throw people at the problems. You can't put a cop on every corner, and do you really want to live in a society with a cop on very corner?' "

2000: "Rana Sampson, a former police sergeant in New York who is director of public safety for the University of San Diego, said: 'What the NYPD did was throw people at the problem, putting cops on every corner, but who wants to live in a society like that?' "

Butterfield never got around to checking whether his good friend Sampson still worked at the University of San Diego in 2000; she didn't.

University of Wisconsin law professor emeritus Herman Goldstein also makes regular appearances. In 1999, Goldstein scolded Giuliani and Bratton for eliminating community policing and investing heavily in police operations. "This was almost coming full cycle back to the 1960s," he said, "to the idea that the police alone can fight crime." In 2000, he told Butterfield enigmatically that a "community gets the policing it deserves, or demands," a statement that would seem to put the "blame" for New York policing on New Yorkers themselves, rather than on the usual Butterfield villains: Giuliani, Bratton, and Safir. Yet Goldstein had harsh words for the leaders as well: "They tried to do all this too quickly without the investment of years of groundwork in refined training and supervision and discipline. Historically, this is a prescription for runaway police organizations."

Before addressing the fallacies in these experts' opinions, let's examine their qualifications for pronouncing so definitively on New York. I reached Goldstein in his Madison, Wisconsin, home. What do you know of New York policing? I asked him. "Not much," he said frankly. "I'm not studying New York at all. I just know it from a distance." I wasn't sure I had heard correctly. You haven't studied the department? No, he hadn't. "I understand the complexity of these matters. To speak authoritatively, you need to know more." He hasn't been to New York at all to study it since Bratton took over.

Goldstein advocates something called problem-solving policing. Arguably, New York is now an exemplar of creative problem solving. Isn't

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house where Eugene Rivers conducts his street-savvy youth ministry, and you'll hear statements that make you think you're in another universe from New York. Coalition member Reverend Larry Mays is presiding, and cops, probation officers, and officials of the schools and social work agencies are in attendance. The meeting focuses on a recent surge in youth violence. "The two pillars of the drop in youth violence are the preachers and the police," Mays observes. "The third pillar—the parents—is really frustrating." Mays's statement is typical of Ten-Point candor. Adds Rivers: "There's certain things the police and the mayor can't say [about personal responsibility]; the community has to say it. But the community is in denial."

The ministers, however, have no problem saying those things, loudly and often. The Coalition is currently under attack for a flyer it distributed in the violent Cape Verdean African community: ATTENTION CAPE VERDEAN YOUTH! YOU BRING THE NOISE, YOU GET THE NOISE. WELCOME TO AMERICA. "The Boston police said: 'Count us out, this is too provocative,'" laughs Ten-Point member Mark Scott. Rivers once announced at a middle school: "The Bloods and the Crips will be crushed." Had the police made such a statement, denunciations would have thundered down.

So cordial is the relation between the ministers and the police that the ministers sing the cops' praises: "When the police do the right thing, you have to do everything you can to make sure it gets coverage," pastor Ray Hammond of the Bethel AME Church tells me. And so great is the trust between the two groups that the ministers point out the worst

Compstat a laser beam for problem solving? I asked. "It may well be that Compstat does problem solving, I don't know."

Isn't New York trying to address quality-of-life problems, just as Goldstein recommended in his 1990 book? "I'm not saying that New York is not doing something. I would never say that, because I don't know."

Hasn't Giuliani introduced innovative programs to bring down crime, like domestic violence prevention? He was getting peeved by now. "As I told you at the onset, I don't know what they're doing."

How then did he make such specific accusations against the NYPD, suggesting it was a "runaway" organization? "Did I say 'runaway organization'? I was speaking more generally in the *New York Times*," he explains.

Goldstein even disclaims the central thesis of the Butterfield articles: that one can compare cities on their policing. "It's impossible to compare cities," he says.

Yet it must be a hallmark of criminologists to speak authoritatively on matters they have never studied. For even as Goldstein was acknowledging his lack of knowledge of the NYPD, he continued the attack. "Broken windows became transformed into an aggressive form of policing under Giuliani," he said. "This occurred when they found out that turnstile jumpers had weapons." Now this happens to be the wildly ignorant thesis of Jeffrey Rosen's April 10 *New Republic* cover story. So the misinformation loop runs like this: criminologists borrow from journalists, who then borrow from them, ad infinitum, until they have created an impregnable wall of untruth.

Rana Sampson, who accuses the NYPD of merely "throwing people at the problem," shares Goldstein's liberating lack of knowledge. Butterfield identifies her as a former NYPD sergeant, without mentioning that she hasn't worked or lived in New York since the late 1980s. For the last seven years—the entire span of the Giuliani period—she has worked in San Diego, absorbing news accounts, no doubt, which make everyone an expert.

Now let's examine these experts' opinions. Rana Sampson criticizes the Giuliani NYPD for "putting cops on every corner." But "who wants to live in a society like that?" she asks. Everything about this proposition is wrong. Trying to put cops on every corner has been a hallmark of the city's allegedly less "aggressive" police eras. The first commissioner to promise a "Cop of the Block" was Patrick Murphy, Mayor John Lindsay's liberal police commissioner, who asked his cops to "rap with the people and make friends." Commissioner Lee Brown also declared that the beat cop was back, and inaugurated a "Cop's Block" program. Mayor David Dinkins started the increase in the

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young malefactors to the police, while, on the ministers' say-so, the police go easy on first-time offenders whom the ministers volunteer to straighten out themselves.

The NYPD actively cultivates relations with the minority clergy, too, but it has yet to find any ministers willing to take as public a position on personal responsibility as those in Boston. "The major difference between New York and Boston's black leadership is the willingness to address black-on-black crime," explains Eugene Rivers. To the Boston ministers, the moral cowardice of New York's black leaders is obvious; only New Yorkers don't see it. "I have no comment on Al Sharpton," says Reverend Mark Scott acerbically. "But it erodes one's moral authority when it is blatantly obvious that crime is a problem—that most people being shot are not shot by cops—and you're silent on the issue."

University of Pennsylvania criminologist John DiIulio, under the auspices of the Manhattan Institute (*City Journal*'s publisher), tried to found a New York Ten-Point Coalition, without success. "No New York ministers wanted to get involved," he says tersely. Commissioner Howard Safir has asked clergy to talk about black-on-black crime and to acknowledge that the real danger in poor neighborhoods comes not from cops—"but every time I'm called a racist," he says. Perhaps Safir is the wrong person to raise these issues, but critics who use Boston as a cudgel to beat the NYPD should suggest a list of leaders who are prepared to ask the hard questions about family responsibility and youth violence. The police would undoubtedly love to work with them.

size of the force by adding 5,000 new officers.

Far from putting cops everywhere, Bratton did the opposite. He repudiated as unrealistic the promise of a cop on every block and concentrated his forces on trouble spots. But as for no one wanting "to live in a society with a cop on every corner," as Sampson claims, that is in fact the "community's" fondest desire. Go to any precinct community council meeting, and the most frequent and insistent demand is for more, and more visible, police.

Sampson's charge that Bratton merely "threw officers at the problem" shows a complete ignorance of Compstat, which made policing rigorously intelligent and information-driven for the first time.

Goldstein accuses the NYPD of lacking "supervision and discipline" under Bratton. In fact, Bratton was probably the most innovative and successful manager in the department's history. He drove accountability through every corner of the organization. Says Goldstein: the department should have invested "years of groundwork in refined training" before doing "all this" (i.e., crime fighting). What was the city to do while the department spent years in "groundwork"? And what the NYPD started doing was enforcing the law, something the Police Academy supposedly trained the cops to do as raw recruits.

Butterfield adds his own howlers to the article. He accuses Bratton and Giuliani of creating the dread Street Crime Unit, whose mission he misleadingly describes as "stop[ping] large numbers of people in high-crime neighborhoods." In fact, Commissioner Patrick Murphy created the unit in the 1970s to protect cabdrivers and truckers from violence, precisely what the unit is doing today. But it is beneath Butterfield to double-check his prejudices.

Butterfield lauds other cities for "listening" to community concerns regarding quality-of-life issues; when the Giuliani administration takes up such issues, it's not "listening to the community," it's a "crackdown on petty crimes."

The "Why Can't New York Police More Like Fort Wayne?" complaint is not Butterfield's only annual theme. Butterfield is nothing if not efficient. In September 1997, in an article titled "Punitive Damages: Crime Keeps Falling but Prisons Keep on Filling," he asked the mind-bending riddle: If the crime rate keeps falling, "why is the number of inmates in prisons and jails around the nation still going up?" Over the next year, apparently no one at the *Times* was able to point out to Butterfield the obvious answer: that crime was falling in part because more people were serving more time. In August 1998, the same Butterfield puzzle appeared on page one: "Prison Population Growing Although Crime Rate Drops." Eight months later, in "Prison Nation," he pointed out the same insuperable paradox.

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This isn't to say that Boston has solved the problem of race and policing. Complaining about harassment for "driving while black" is a "standard routine" for blacks during traffic stops, says traffic officer Kenny Gee. And in a park just down the street from the Dorchester police station, you can hear plenty of Gordon Franklin-esque hostility toward the police. "The majority are total garbage, just garbage," says John, a 32-year-old public works employee who sports a big, gold pistol charm around his neck. John is probably no more reliable a judge of policing than Gangstarr's Gordon Franklin; the New York press, however, would treat him as an expert.

And for all the fanfare around Boston's police-clergy collaboration, Boston's civilian complaint rate—used by *The Economist* as a cudgel against New York—is virtually indistinguishable from New York's: one complaint per 7.7 officers in Boston in 1999, compared with one complaint per eight officers in New York.

San Diego has its share of racial tensions, too. Last August, San Diego cops fatally shot a former NFL player, Demetrius DuBose. The subsequent grandstanding would be familiar to any New Yorker. "The Urban League joins the rest of the African-American community in denouncing the legal lynching of another African-American citizen," said president John W. Johnson. "When will the killings of our black sisters and brothers cease?" The head of the Black Contractors Association, Abdur-Rahim Hameed, suggested that "African-Americans would be better off shooting it out than being shot down in cold blood." Last February, after the San Diego police killed a homeless man, participants in a community forum claimed that black kids were growing up scared of police—a charge that would make any New Yorker feel right at home.

Yet in San Diego, as in Boston, there are also voices of moderation that are all too rare in New York. A black San Diego councilman, George Stevens, publicly rejected the charges that Demetrius DuBose was "lynched." "There's not one piece of evidence that these officers shot Mr. DuBose because he's black," he told a community meeting. No New York black leader said anything comparable after Amadou Diallo was shot.

NYPD brass are well aware of the criticism that they should police more like other cities' departments. But many top New York cops have reservations about those cities' highly touted strategies. They think that Boston, for example, came perilously close to a "deal with the devil," in Louis Anemone's words, in singling out gun violence as the one infraction that would bring down the full weight of the law. They wonder whether the message was: we'll regard anything short of gun violence more leniently. There's some evidence this could be so. A prominent youth outreach worker who helped forge Boston's approach to youth violence told a Kennedy School researcher: "I'm not even going to talk to a kid about stopping selling drugs until I can get him a job." He went on to laud the Boston police for "overlook[ing] a lot of people on purpose, because they weren't violent criminals. They stuck to their word, . . . and that showed a lot of respect."

It is that kind of relativizing—"how can you ask a kid to stop selling drugs when there are no jobs out there?"—that worries New York cops. Boston police captains brag about their jobs programs and other social programs as much as about their enforcement strategies. Their department has unquestionably embraced more of a social services approach to youth crime than the NYPD has, and it always presents its tough message of law enforcement in conjunction with an offer of social services. Since 1996, the department has distributed over $2.2 million in federal funds to community groups, a sure-fire way of gaining support.

In a world of mushy terminology, it is refreshing to find some clear disagreements. "We're a little resistant to the Boston model, because we don't think we need it," says Gary McCarthy, the NYPD's Deputy Commissioner for Operations. "I'm skeptical of social services, because I've seen the effect of enforcement. Social services won't stop people from wanting to make the quick buck. People are lazy. What does work is when you lock a person up, he's not committing any more robberies."

McCarthy is no knee-jerk hard-liner. He is a hero in Washington Heights for creating the city's first Model Block on 163rd Street, the hub of the East Coast drug trade in the early 1990s. After taking out an entire local drug operation, McCarthy and his officers formed tenant associations in each building and worked with the community to clean up the block and "instill civic pride," he says. The

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Detectives Irene Lewis and Dana C. Harper work in the 28th Precinct in Harlem.

results have been spectacular: in 1992, the 34th Precinct set a city record for homicides, with 120; last year, the area had eight. "It was like the sun came out," recalls McCarthy. "I saw a 12-year-old trying to ride a bike for the first time in his life, because he had never been allowed out before."

So McCarthy is hardly averse to working with the community, but he doesn't believe in offering social services or a government-funded job as a quid pro quo for not committing crime. The Model Block is not a social services program; it simply helps people take responsibility for their neighborhood.

After so much relentless criticism, the NYPD is in crisis. Demoralization, especially in the Bronx, is dangerously high. "Cops have to be believers," says a Bronx borough commander. "It doesn't get any worse than the Bronx District Attorney comparing the Diallo shooting with a drive-by shooting. The officers are afraid to engage the bad guys, knowing that *they* might become the bad guys." A patrolman remarks: "Knowing what I do now, I'd never take this job again. I love the job, but you get all the racist abuse. You're always wrong."

The price of such demoralization is steep. A plainclothes officer in Brooklyn gives the street perspective. "This place is getting busy again," he says. "Guns are back on the street, because guys know they won't get tossed." In the Bronx, homicides are up 60 percent this year. And the mauling of women after the Puerto Rican Day parade this June gave New Yorkers a brutal refresher course in order-maintenance policing: when, fearful of racism charges, the cops back away from enforcing the law on the so-called small things—public drinking, drug use, defacement of property, litter—the chaos that lurks beneath the surface of this huge metropolis can explode.

To combat the revisionists, Mayor Giuliani and Commissioner Safir should throw open the department, now bunkered in and defensive, calling in the press and community leaders to see Compstat sessions and precinct-community programs, and showing off the Police Academy's innovative training programs. By the same token, they should make straightforward acknowledgments on those occasions when cops make serious mistakes. But the longer the revisionists continue their crusade against the police, the further New York's crime-fighting legacy is likely to erode. ■

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The Children's Defense Fund: Not Part of the Solution

Even after welfare reform, the fashionable, much-hyped CDF still doesn't grasp why there's so much child misery in the U.S.

Kay S. Hymowitz

I am sitting in the immense ballroom of the New York Hilton, and everyone is crying. Over 3,000 people are wiping their eyes and sniffling into their chicken francese and radicchio salad on the third day of the annual conference of the Children's Defense Fund this past March. No, it is not the food. Nor is it a boring speech. This is the "Beat the Odds" lunch, held annually at the national CDF conference and periodically in cities around the country, and its purpose is to pay tribute to young people who have overcome extreme obstacles to academic success—and to make you cry.

Certainly the six kids being feted deserve both the applause and the scholarship money raised by CDF. There is Miguel Rodriguez, who lost his mother to illness and his father to jail, who himself has done time at New York's Spofford Juvenile Center, yet has managed to pull himself together and gain acceptance to John Jay College. There is Shi Zhi Chen, a 19-year-old Chinese immigrant, who after two years scraping by as a busboy while sending money back home to his family and teaching himself English, has been accepted at SUNY Binghamton. But this orgy of whoops, ahhhs, and tears does not really seem to be about congratulating six deserving kids. It is feel-good showbiz, where hard knocks are the entertainment.

The mistress of ceremonies, the poet Maya Angelou, an enormous, almost mythic, presence in her gold necklaces and giant hoop earrings glittering off her white silk suit, wipes her eyes with a flourish and sighs deeply after the videos narrating the biography of each honoree (donated and produced by MTV). Then (on a stage decorated by Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia) she wraps her long arms around each of them (dressed in clothes contributed by tony clothier Paul Stuart). "I have long wanted the Kleenex concession for these lunches and dinners," she jests, in her sonorous James Earl Jones voice, and we laugh through our tears.

There are a few awkward moments: Shi Zhi Chen's formal bow as he receives his award hints at the dignity that has been sacrificed for the sake of the Oprahized audience. And though Angelou claims repeatedly that these kids are proof of CDF's fine work, only one of the six long-struggling honorees, all of whom thank their teachers and relatives, mentions the sort of social program the organization champions as making a difference. But swept away in good feelings, no one seems to notice.

The Children's Defense Fund and its near-legendary founder, Marion Wright Edelman, may have lost some power after welfare reform, but no one could argue that they don't still have influence. The line of people waiting for Edelman to autograph her latest book—teachers, social workers, domestic-violence counselors, child-welfare workers, foster care workers, after-school program organizers, nurses, pediatricians, psychologists, priests, and ministers—wound in and around the hallways of the Hilton's conference floor like a line of pilgrims at Lourdes. And CDF continues to be a media and corporate darling. *Harper's Bazaar* has crowned Edelman "America's Universal Mother"; *Family Circle* has given her its lifetime achievement award. Powerful corporations like Sony and Citigroup rush to get on her donor list.

Edelman can outscold Pat Robertson any day, but no one seems to hold it against her. What other person in political life could call on Old Testament prophets and Jesus Christ to denounce her ideological opponents—as Edelman did during the debate over welfare reform—without Frank Rich reaching for his vituperative pen? And what other organization could give so much play at its national

ARTHUR WILLIAM DEVIS (1763–1822), *EMILY AND GEORGE MASON*, YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

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conference to MTV, a television station that feeds the young soft porn and violent music videos, and still represent itself as the protector of children—without anyone saying a word?

But the danger so clearly on display at the Beat the Odds lunch is that Edelman's nearly three-decade effort to keep alive the moral and biblical spirit of the early civil rights movement is finally collapsing into empty sentimentality. Certainly, by most practical political measures, her empire is in big trouble. Only six years ago, CDF appeared to be in a position to write social policy for the Clinton administration: Donna Shalala, a former board chairwoman, was secretary of Health and Human Services; Edelman's husband, Peter Edelman, was one of Shalala's top assistants; and Hillary Clinton, another former chairwoman, was First Lady. Two years later, when the president signed the welfare reform bill and both Edelmans angrily estranged themselves from the administration, they suffered a profound political loss, but at least they could take the moral high ground. Today, that is no longer possible. As evidence that welfare reform may actually be improving poor children's lives begins to mount, CDF's defeat has become a rout—politically, ideologically, and, yes, morally.

"Though wedded to increasingly discredited assumptions, CDF struggles to insist on its moral authority."

Edelman has even lost control of her trademark rhetoric; now just about every politician and lobbying group in the country has taken up the rallying cry of children. Not long ago, a group of poor black mothers in tee shirts with the words SAVE THE CHILDREN appeared in front of a congressional subcommittee: they were not demonstrating in favor of Head Start, health insurance, or WIC, all of them favorite CDF causes. They were demonstrating in favor of school vouchers, a cause usually associated with Edelman's ideological enemies.

Still, while the Children's Defense Fund may be weakened, like liberalism in general, it is not ready to give up the ghost. Though primarily focused on Washington and dedicated to federal programs, the organization is scrambling to expand its grass-roots base and local influence as power and money shift back to the states. Though wedded to increasingly discredited assumptions and models of poverty, it struggles to insist on its moral authority. Yet, if the three-day conference in New York suggested that much of that authority has evaporated, leaving behind the sticky dregs of sentiment, it also hinted how CDF and its liberal allies will adapt to life in a post-welfare nation.

When she founded the Children's Defense Fund in 1973, Edelman, occasional advisor to Martin Luther King and the first black woman lawyer in Mississippi, was making a self-conscious effort to breathe new life into a faltering civil rights movement. With Nixon in office, many activists, who had successfully fought some of the more glaring racial injustices and helped to initiate the massive War on Poverty, seemed to be turning inward, ready to cultivate their own gardens. Not Edelman. She had been indelibly affected by her own experiences of racial cruelty and the poverty she had seen in the rural South; it was Edelman who in 1967 had given Robert Kennedy a tour of the grinding poverty of the Mississippi Delta. Still devoted to the causes to which she had given her youth, and doubtless remembering the emotional impact of black children being spat upon and jeered as they integrated southern schools, she came up with a brilliant notion, one that continues to reverberate in American politics to this day: keep the movement going by making it about children. "When you talked about poor people or black people you faced a shrinking audience," she has said. "I got the idea that children might be a very effective way to broaden the base for change." And so it was that the poor people's campaign, which she herself had recommended, on Bobby Kennedy's advice, to Martin Luther King, became the poor children's campaign.

But if the symbolism of the sad-eyed, shabbily dressed child captured the plain moral truths of the poverty and racism of the Jim Crow South,

FOLLOWER OF WILLIAM LARKIN (FL. 1608-20). *THREE SISTERS.* DENVER ART MUSEUM/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

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it largely obfuscates the realities of today. Poverty has undergone a sea change since CDF came into existence. Even though the income gap between rich and poor has widened, the average poor person today still lives better than the average *person* in the 1950s. Today's poor are as likely to suffer from obesity as hunger. Medicaid now ensures them pre- and postnatal care and childhood vaccinations. Nearly 20 percent of those below the federal poverty line are immigrants like Shi Zhi Chen, who came to the United States because they knew that it offered more opportunity in the long run. Indeed, even in the short run, both their earnings and their standard of living improve substantially (see "Doing Better Than We Thought," page 7).

Moreover, since the mid-1960s, long-term poverty has been largely a problem defined by welfare-dependent single mothers and their children. As of 1994, the last year for which data on chronic poverty exist, over half of the long-term poor lived in female-headed families; nearly 18 percent of female-headed families were chronically poor. According to a recent Urban Institute report, children born outside of marriage are almost twice as likely to be poor than those born to married parents. In fact, single parenthood has become a more reliable predictor of child poverty than race; there is no substantial difference in the poverty rate among blacks and non-blacks when controlling for marital status. Likewise, study after study has found that single parenthood strongly correlates with the poor educational outcomes, criminal involvement, and teen pregnancy that are likely to perpetuate poverty.

These thorny realities, which have made only rare appearances in Edelman's speeches and books, continued to be missing in action at CDF's 2000 conference. What dominated instead was a melodramatic Manichaeanism pitting CDF and its caring allies in a battle against the racism, greed, and self-indulgence that apparently besets much of the rest of the nation: in other words, the old poverty paradigm. "Children are poor because we have lost our moral bearings," Edelman wrote in her 1987 *Families in Peril*; and, 13 years later, "Ending Child Poverty As We Know It," a plenary session at the conference moderated by Peter Edelman, continued in that vein. The panel, consisting of William Spriggs of the National Urban League, Deepak

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Bhargava of the Center for Community Change, and Jacqueline Marte and Shana Turner, two young former welfare recipients, was asked: "Why do we have so many poor people even at a time of such prosperity?" Turner, now a student at the University of Massachusetts, was the star of the session. The problem, she announced, could be captured in one word: "greed." "Instead of giving money to an organization, they [the rich] go on vacation for the third time in a year. . . . People with money don't care." The audience, which apparently did not include money-eyed representatives from the many corporations underwriting the conference, applauded enthusiastically.

Sexism, according to Spriggs, is another cause of child poverty; women earn less than men, he said, and this puts their children at risk. But it was what he didn't say that tells the real story. Economists are now finding that women earn less not because they are women, but because they are mothers. Child care appears to limit women's hours and possibly their ambitions; men and women without children and with the same education and work experience have nearly identical earnings. If Spriggs had said this, he also would have had to admit the obvious way to alleviate this particular cause of child poverty: a working (or, for that matter, a stay-at-home) father to compensate for the loss of income inevitable when there are children to tend to.

But he couldn't say it even if he wanted to. Single parenthood was the elephant in the ballroom that everyone was determined not to see. When Peter Edelman finally did raise the issue—"Someone who disagreed would say the problem is 'illegitimacy'; it's not all this other stuff"—he clearly intended only to mock it. Predictably, he directed the question toward the two former welfare recipients, one of them a single mother herself. Jacqueline Marte avoided the question, calling for more jobs for women in the form of a public jobs program. Shana Turner was simply indignant. "They take away people's basic rights to shelter, food. . . . You tell a person they cannot reproduce, [which] is every person's human right." Generous applause once again greeted her summation: "These people do not look at poor people as human!"

"Single parenthood was the elephant in the ballroom that everyone was determined not to see."

Turner's outburst and the audience's response throw into sharp relief the poor fit between old poverty thinking and new poverty realities. The issue, of course, is not whether people have a right to reproduce, but rather whether they have the right to expect that their neighbors not only feed, clothe, and house them, but provide medical care, child care, early childhood education, and intervention services when they do bear children. Old poverty thinking, which views America as being in the middle of a stark battle between racial malice and greed versus tolerance and compassion, cannot even pose this question. Any reluctance to give to the poor, any attempt to distinguish between those who are ill-equipped to support their children and those who are temporarily down on their luck, must be suspect. But the dissonance between this old poverty moralism and a new poverty virtually defined by illegitimacy makes a puzzle of the advocates' compassion. First, they ignore the possibility that attitudes like Turner's can actually create child poverty. Then, while they lavish sentiment on children whose birth into poverty they've refused to discourage and may even have helped to promote, they deny it to those, including the near-poor, whom they insist must foot the voluminous bills that include—can it be a coincidence?—their own salaries.

Marion Edelman has always made a point of nourishing young leadership, something she gratefully remembers was done for her during her years in the South. Evidently Turner is one of the chosen. At the end of the panel, she was invited to read a rap poem she had written. Her utterly pedestrian composition, which included a fond allusion to murdered gangsta rapper Tupac Shakur, earned her a standing ovation and a cry of "Fantastic!" from Peter Edelman. Someone watching that panel could be excused for

ADRIAAN VAN DER WERF (1659–1722), *A CAT WATCHING TWO BOYS*. JOHNNY VAN HAEFTEN GALLERY/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

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wondering whether the child advocates of tomorrow will be sufficiently thoughtful, but he need not worry that they will be lacking in self-esteem.

Little in Marion Edelman's early personal history would have pointed toward the condescension, the melodramatic sentimentality, the denial of difficult realities, and the nostalgia so frequently on display during the conference. Although raised in the segregated South, this gifted, youngest daughter of a Baptist minister and his selfless wife had a childhood rich in religious faith, moral refinement, and dignity. "When I think of them," she writes of her parents in her affecting new memoir *Lanterns*, "I think of integrity, consistency, high expectations, family rituals and regularity, prayer, meals, chores, church activities, . . . of common sense and sound choices, of sacrifice and bedrock faith. . . . They never let us down." The views of marriage and child rearing she absorbed in her youth could scarcely be more traditional. "I learned from my parents," she continues, "that marriage is a struggle and a sacred partnership between two people and a covenant with God and with the children the union brings into the world." If her parents were homespun, they were also literate folks; their parlor mantel was adorned with a miniature set of Shakespeare's plays.

"Welfare reform has not only not abandoned children, it may even be improving their lot."

Like many girls who go on to become successful women, the young Marion especially adored her father, and from an early age, when she realized his disappointment at her elder sister's early marriage, she sought to satisfy his ambitions. After graduating from Spelman College, and despite her mother's ambivalence, she went on to Yale Law School. Her success reflected not just her father's influence but also the commitment to education held by many poor southern blacks who understood its potential to transform both individual lives and the racial status quo. By the time she became active in the civil rights movement, she was able to bring to it both the enthusiasm and passion for justice common to youth and also the intelligence, dignity, and self-sacrifice that she had learned from the adults around her.

In recent decades, however, though Edelman has been quick to use her strongly developed moral sense to challenge the rich and middle class, she has been content to let it atrophy when it came to the new realities of poverty. As Americans soured on AFDC when the underclass grew in the inner cities, she accused them of racism and greed; but when illegitimacy skyrocketed in the ghettos, she remained stuck in the old poverty thinking and said nothing—though she knew from experience the importance of fathers in children's lives. When the country debated welfare reform, she vigorously resisted work requirements—though she had seen with her own eyes that even the most destitute gain self-respect from hard work and orderly lives. Edelman was in high dudgeon when President Clinton, her former friend and ally, was on the verge of signing a welfare reform bill: she called it "national child abandonment" and "a defining moral litmus test for your presidency" in an open letter published in the *Washington Post*. She organized the "Stand for Children" march on Washington. And when the president signed the bill and her husband resigned from his post as assistant secretary of HHS, she called it a "moment of shame," comparable to the worst human evils: "Never let us confuse what is legal with what is right," she reproached. "Everything Hitler did in Nazi Germany was legal, but it was not right."

The problem facing CDF at the 2000 conference, then, was simple but profound: Edelman's old poverty assumptions were utterly—and one might add, especially given her odious analogy, shamefully—wrong. Welfare reform has not only not abandoned children, it may even be improving their lot. To CDF's credit, this truth made its way into at least one of the smaller sessions called "Welfare to What?" Speaker Jack Tweedie, director of the Children and Families Program of the National Conference of

FOLLOWER OF FRANCOIS-HUBERT DROUAIS, (1727–75), *THREE CHILDREN*, CHRISTIE'S IMAGES-LONDON/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

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State Legislatures, announced that welfare reform has produced more change than any policy since the New Deal. He produced state-by-state surveys showing that most of those who have left welfare are working and are doing so at more than the minimum wage, that about half appear to be better off financially, and that median earnings for those who are working appear to rise over time. Tweedie was no Pollyanna. He cautioned that in several southern states, two-thirds of families who have left welfare are still not working, that in some states between 12 and 14 percent of ex-welfare families are experiencing increased financial hardship, and that we still do not know much about a large number of others.

Tweedie might have saved his breath. The child advocates in the audience seemed more interested in preserving their own assumptions than in hearing evidence about how to improve the lives of poor children. As he spoke, the room grew ominously quiet. When he said that one survey in Wisconsin did show that families were broken up because of welfare reform, but that the number was unexpectedly small, the audience groaned: "Come on! One family is too much!" A priest, angrily asserting that more people were coming to soup kitchens, shouted: "If legislators think this is progress, it's time to vote them out!" The audience applauded heartily. "Look, I work for the states," Tweedie finally blurted apologetically.

In other sessions, any evidence of welfare reform's success never even surfaced. Welfare reform was referred to as "so-called welfare reform" and remained the work of the damned. At one session, a panelist blasted workfare because, she argued bizarrely, it "enslaves people to the system." Others reverted to the tired, and demonstrably false, argument that work requirements deprive people of the opportunity for training that would lead to "meaningful jobs."

But Deborah Weinstein, the other speaker on the "Welfare to What?" panel and director of CDF's Family Income Division, made it clear that the Children's Defense Fund's leadership is going to be more savvy than some of their speakers and their rank and file. After presenting her own version of the data—emphasizing the number of those leaving the rolls with severe barriers to employment, the decreasing number of children receiving food

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stamps, and the increase in the number of children in deep poverty—she brought out the lemonade: welfare reform has actually yielded more money for other sorts of poverty programs that CDF has always promoted.

She was correct. Congress stipulated in the welfare reform act, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), that each state would get a block grant based on its welfare enrollment in the early 1990s. Now, as caseloads have dropped by over 50 percent, many states are flush with federal welfare money. West Virginia, for instance, has a reserve of $150 million, although current caseloads require only $50 million a year for cash benefits. To its surprise, CDF has suddenly found itself with an unexpected windfall: the unscrupulous uncle they despised has left them a fortune, and they are not above claiming the filthy lucre. Weinstein flashed a banner in block letters on the screen up front, a new rallying cry for the troops: USE THE TANF FUNDS! States are now wrestling with how to spend the money, she reported. "Should it be spent on health benefits? Should it be spent on child care?" "Just spend it!" a woman sitting behind me muttered impatiently.

The pragmatic new approach of CDF's leadership toward welfare reform may be dishonest and grudgingly late in coming, but it is not wrong; many former recipients need a good deal of costly, temporary support in child care, transportation, and supervision as they enter the workforce. The problem is captured by that "Just spend it!" In the past, CDF has not only promoted programs of dubious value; it has done so with the self-righteousness of the elect. The organization, for instance, has long shilled for Head Start; in the early sixties in Mississippi, Edelman was heavily involved with one of the earliest Head Start programs, whose community-based approach, including parental training, medical care, and the like, seems to remain a model in her mind. Head Start is always high on the list of programs she insists are integral to the nation's social and moral health.

Just recently, CDF published a pamphlet entitled: "Head Start: Helping Families Move From Welfare to Work," an attempt to repackage Head Start as a work assistance program. CDF proposes to lavish TANF funds on the program, vastly expanding its hours to accommodate working mothers. But this marketing tactic can't change reality. It's been clear since the time that Edelman founded CDF that what the program was accomplishing, as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan put it, was that children were "getting their teeth fixed, but little else that can be quantified." Some $31 billion and nearly 30 years later, the Government Accounting Office concluded, in a 1997 summary of the research, that there is still little evidence of the program's long-term impact on poor children. And while there is no reason to believe that Head Start has done anyone any harm, its untouchable status as the premier compassionate social program, a status CDF has nurtured, may well have deprived more effective programs of money and attention. At least in this case, it is difficult not to conclude that for all her vaunted altruism, Edelman's affection for her civil rights era memories finally trumps her interest in what really fosters the well-being of children.

All of these flaws—the sentimental attachment to outmoded civil rights era programs and notions of poverty, the willful avoidance of relevant research, the belated and opportunistic attempt to latch on to popular public concerns, the holier-than-thou attitude—are also ingredients in CDF's new approach to education. Schooling was front and center at the conference's first plenary session, perhaps in a belated recognition by CDF that the organization may be out of step with its own constituents. Plainly, for a growing number of minority parents, education, not poverty and racism, is the most pressing civil rights issue. Of course, Edelman has long expressed an interest in education, and has frequently pointed to the link between poor educational achievement and poverty, low wages, and teen pregnancy. But in this area, too, she has remained intensely loyal to old poverty thinking. Instead of addressing the underclass lack of interest in education, she has stuck to the usual line espoused by other liberal groups and the teachers' unions, blaming the poor achievement of urban poor children on inadequate school funding. And instead of attacking the failed curricula and ineffective teaching in urban districts, she has simply pushed for more money for "quality" preschools, even though research has consistently shown that their modest benefits fade out once children enter the primary school classrooms that Edelman has never criticized.

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At first, the opening-night plenary session on education seemed like it was going to be something different. Preacher Floyd Flake, a former New York congressman and now president of Edison Charter Schools, described the success of his Queens parochial school, which is giving minority children a solid education on $3,500 a year. But once CDF chairman David Hornbeck, then-superintendent of the Philadelphia school system, got hold of the microphone, we were back in the old poverty church. Applause greeted his pronouncement that "the white male power structure has not begun to assimilate" the fact that by the year 2030 there would be more "so-called minority children than majority." Racism is the cause of minority underachievement, he went on: we have "a system that doesn't believe in poor children." "Politics in this country is when . . . five white guys get in a room and cut up the pie," he thundered. "Rage is the right word. Until we boil over in controlled ways, this is not going to change." If audience members noticed that the race-righteous Hornbeck was sitting on a panel with two powerful, pie-cutting African-Americans—Rosa Smith, the superintendent of the Columbus, Ohio, schools, and ex-congressman Flake, frequently cited as a serious possible New York City mayoral candidate—they didn't let on. But then, skeptical irony is not a strong suit at the CDF.

CDF's recent foray into actual teaching offers the best summary of its stubborn attempt to graft old poverty approaches onto new realities. The CDF's Black Community Crusade for Children, aimed specifically at the problems of black poverty, has inaugurated a series of Freedom Schools—after-school and summer school programs taught by college kids. The schools are meant to recall the civil rights movement's Freedom Schools of the mid-1960s. But the name and age of the instructors are about the only thing that Martin Luther King, or, for that matter, the young Marion Wright Edelman, would recognize; everything else about the Freedom Schools is just the kind of edu-babble that has pushed desperate inner-city parents into the arms of voucher proponents.

True, recognizing that most parents today simply want their children to learn to read, the Freedom Schools offer an "Integrated Reading Curriculum." But it is neither integrated nor a reading curriculum. It explicitly avoids teaching the mechanics of reading and offers instead the ineffective if trendy "whole language" method of reading instruction, coupled with an Afrocentric curriculum heavily imbued with the hokey ethos of self-esteem. Each school day begins with a meeting called a *hamarbee*, which is Swahili for "unity." The *Kansas City Star* described the children at a Kansas City Freedom School singing a rap song, "Ain't no party like the Freedom School party, 'cause the Freedom School party don't stop. We got it goin' on at the Freedom School!" In *Lanterns*, Edelman recounts how, as a college student, she read Ruskin and Tolstoy as well as Langston Hughes and Booker T. Washington; she listened to Brahms as well as jazz. She does not say much about the early education that instilled the intellectual curiosity and cosmopolitan tastes that eventually led her to Yale Law School, but it's a safe bet that it did not include reciting a rap song at a *hamarbee*.

"Edelman's legacy has been less to alleviate child poverty than to impoverish the national conversation."

The truth is, with its thick overlay of sentimentality, the Children's Defense Fund obfuscates the answers to crucial questions about America's social future. It is reasonable to conclude that Edelman's legacy has been less to alleviate child poverty, which has not budged much since the time her organization was founded, than to impoverish the national conversation, whose every third word is a disingenuous "children." As London's *Daily Telegraph* observed when Hillary Clinton mused aloud about adopting a baby around the time of the 1996 convention: "Now when the going gets tough, the tough start baby-talk." Events of the last four years suggest that real change comes when people start talking—and more to the point, thinking—like grownups. ■

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The Triumph of Silicon Alley

No one predicted it; few perceived it: but in just four years, the New Media industry has emerged as New York's most powerful job engine.

Steven Malanga

From modest beginnings only five or six years ago, when observers viewed Silicon Alley companies as a relatively insignificant and perhaps ephemeral sideshow in the New York economy, the New Media industry has now clearly emerged as one of the city's most important engines of growth. Between 1995 and the end of last year, employment in the industry shot up over 500 percent, from some 27,000 to about 138,000 people, according to a recent PricewaterhouseCoopers survey. That means that the New Media industry is now a bigger New York employer than the construction, legal-services, banking, and apparel businesses, among other important city industries. It is Silicon Alley, not Wall Street, the study demonstrates, that has driven Gotham's private sector hiring in the last two years.

The new industry's growth has sparked big changes in other parts of the city's economy. In the last two years, job gains among Internet companies have helped to reshape whole neighborhoods, as Silicon Alley companies have snapped up cheap office space in areas that other New York businesses traditionally ignored. And well-funded Internet companies have prompted the city's law firms, accountants, even restaurants and caterers, to alter the way they do business in order to win new high-tech clients.

It's understandable that experts were slow to perceive the magnitude of the upheaval taking place under their feet. Government data make it hard to measure Internet company growth, and the industry's volatility, with highly visible company failures, gives an impression of impermanence. But it is now certain that the online revolution is here to stay, even if the specifics are still being worked out. As a key part of that revolution, businesses have increasingly been using the Internet as a way to operate more efficiently and to reach customers more effectively. New York, long one of the world's centers of business-to-business expertise, has used this traditional strength to claim a prominent place in the Internet world.

Where the New Media industry goes from here is crucial to the city's future. If the city is to keep growing, it can only do so with a powerful contribution from digital businesses—meaning that policy makers need to think hard, and fast, about encouraging a climate in which this new industry can continue to prosper.

Few would have predicted such dynamism during Silicon Alley's earliest days. Back in 1995, when just over a third of American households owned personal computers and only 13 percent of those households used the Internet or online services, a new industry sprang up to supply PC owners with computer games and interactive learning programs on CD-ROMs. New York's first New Media companies set up shop here to draw on the city's rich pool of artists, writers, graphic designers, and storytellers to produce those CD-ROMs.

Typical were Chelsea-based Music Pen, which produced award-winning entertainment and educational CD-ROMs in partnership with Microsoft and Scholastic, and Voyager, based in SoHo, which pumped out CD-ROMs with titles like *Multimedia Beethoven* and *Poetry in Motion*. By 1994, Voyager was a $12 million company employing more than 100 people. Typical too was Wanderlust Interactive, which created interactive games for kids. Founder Catherine Winchester, seeing that content was becoming the key to her industry, sold her Hong Kong-based software company to move to talent-rich New York in 1994. With her industry experience, then rare, she quickly attracted venture capital and in March 1996 went public in one of the city's first digital offerings, raising $6.2 million.

The city's publishing companies, owners of plenty of content to offer computer users, rushed

Graphs by Alberto Mena

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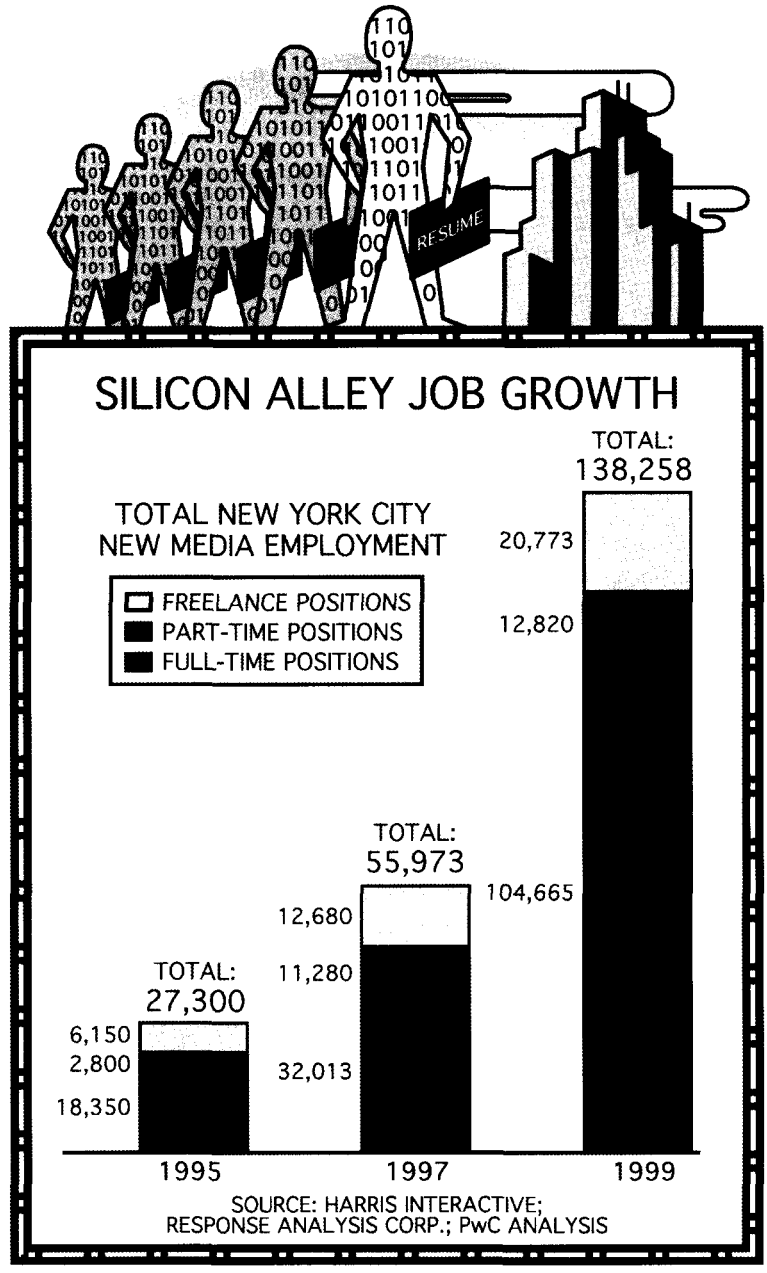
into this market too, boosting the new industry further. Random House, Simon & Schuster, Time Warner, and HarperCollins all began interactive divisions that churned out electronic versions of popular books and CD-ROMs based on other media properties, like *Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual.*

But the CD-ROM era was fleeting. By the end of 1996, technical leaps allowed computers to send and receive ever-greater amounts of data over ordinary phone lines. Soon, PC users found much to fascinate them on the Internet, and their interest in buying CD-ROMs quickly waned. Wanderlust's first major product bombed during the Christmas season of 1996, and the company eventually filed for bankruptcy. Voyager had to start cutting workers in the spring of 1997, and it too eventually disappeared. The city's biggest publishers all exited the business or dramatically scaled back their commitments.

A few pioneers also boldly staked out the Internet during that period. Jim Butterworth, a Lehman Brothers investment banker, raised $4 million to start Netcast Communications, which aimed to broadcast radio programs over the Internet. In 1996, David Rose, a scion of one of the city's real-estate families, raised more than $4 million in venture capital to found AirMedia, which planned to use a new technology to deliver information to personal computers from the Internet. Both these early Internet players folded without ever producing significant revenues.



Despite these failures, the industry kept growing in New York, because even as the focus shifted to the Internet, one thing remained the same: content was crucial—and the city had shown, back with the CD-ROM makers, that it could provide it. Entrepreneurs rushed to design Internet services based in New York.

Candice Carpenter, who had launched the home shopping network Q2 for Barry Diller's QVC, started iVillage to cultivate an online audience of women. Hiring journalists from the New York-based fashion and health magazines, as well as producers from the New York-headquartered TV networks, the company rolled out a series of sites offering advice on beauty, diet, fitness, health, and so on. A persuasive money-raiser, Carpenter gar-

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nered $67 million through several rounds of venture-capital financing before eventually taking the company public last year.

In 1996, Fernando Espuelas, an AT&T marketing executive who was not yet 30, founded StarMedia Network in Connecticut to create Internet services for Spanish and Portuguese speakers in Latin America and U.S. markets with large Latino populations such as New York and Florida. AT&T co-workers, says Uruguayan-born Espuelas, "thought I was out of my mind"—a frequent experience of New Media entrepreneurs back then. Espuelas and co-founder Jack Chen quickly saw the importance of Manhattan and moved the company there. "New York City has a wealth of human capital, supplying us with multinational and culturally diverse employees," Espuelas says. "Our close proximity to Wall Street enables us to tap into the pulse of the financial community." Targeting a virtually ignored niche, StarMedia garnered $80 million in venture capital from the likes of Henry Kravis and Chase Capital Partners.

Crucial to Silicon Alley's growth were investors willing to pour money into New York-area companies even as some of the earliest investments in the marketplace evaporated. In the early 1990s, venture-capital investments in local technology companies could be counted in the tens of millions of dollars. But by 1996, West Coast VCs experienced in technology investments started noticing all the activity and ideas emanating from New York, and they began placing their bets. They were used to the idea that to score big in new technology companies you had to make many investments, knowing that only a very few will succeed. Steel-nerved investors from around the nation put about $185 million into Gotham's tech companies in 1997 and another $287 million in 1998.

The sudden availability of money helped to create a class of technology entrepreneur not previously common in New York. "The entrepreneurship virus has hit New York in the last five years," says venture capitalist Brian Horey, co-founder of the New York New Media Association, Silicon Alley's trade group. "Venture capitalists used to have to teach people in New York how to be entrepreneurs, but not anymore."

The real turning point came toward the end of 1998. After a series of highly successful public offerings of West Coast Internet firms, Wall Street turned toward the Internet industry in its own backyard. In the fall of 1998, Manhattan-based EarthWeb went public in a highly touted offer that shot up more than threefold in one day. Soon after, theglobe.com followed with its own glossy offering, and the IPO gold rush was on in New York.

In 1999, 41 New York-area Internet companies (37 of them within the city) went public, raising $3.5 billion—more than all New York companies of every type had been able to raise in the IPO market in any other year except 1998. The venture capital market also exploded. New York–area Internet companies, mostly within the city limits, raised about $1.6 billion ($2.5 billion, if you count Internet-related companies) from venture capitalists in 1999, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. In the fourth quarter alone, technology companies accounted for 70 percent of all the money invested by venture capitalists in the region. Adding in several hundred million dollars in other types of financing, including convertible bond offerings and private deals from so-called angel investors, local New Media companies raised a total north of $6 billion in 1999.

The cash has spurred an unprecedented hiring frenzy. Just consider the remarkable growth of DoubleClick, now one of the city's biggest New Media employers. In 1995, Kevin O'Connor was helping to run an Atlanta software company when he became convinced that online advertising would have a big future on the Internet. He and his partners spent eight months working on software to help organize advertising online. Then he journeyed to New York—the nation's advertising industry capital and, he believed, the future center of advertising online—and founded DoubleClick in January 1996.

At first the company went almost unnoticed. Advertising on the Internet was minuscule in 1996 and difficult to track. But as technological advances drew more people online, DoubleClick flourished. Its online network became one of the industry standards, allowing advertisers to place their ads, with only a single transaction, on more than 100 websites. DoubleClick also developed a series of smaller net-

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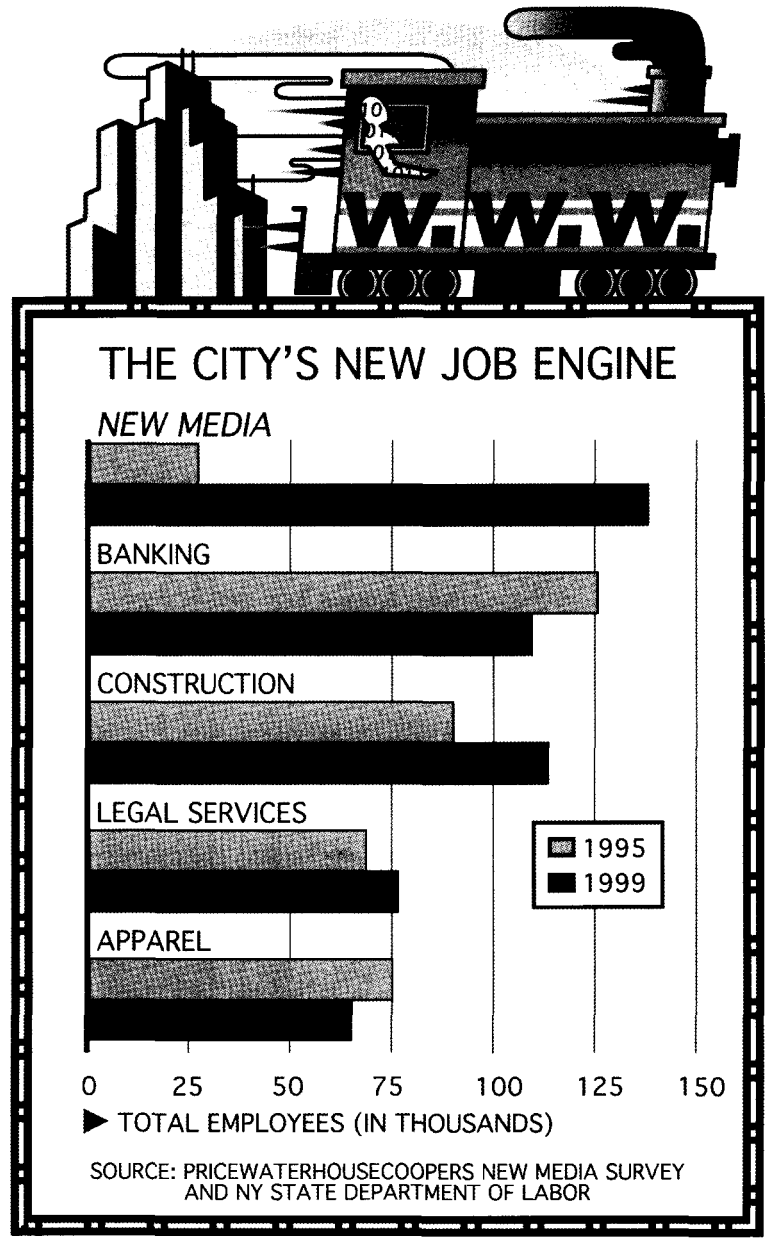
works composed of sites about specific subjects—entertainment, say, or technology—for advertisers who wanted to target their message on the web.

The strategy helped advertisers make sense out of the cacophony of the Internet, and DoubleClick rapidly attracted attention and investments. It grew from 13 employees in March 1996 to 171 at the close of 1997, when it registered for a public offering. Since the IPO, the company's growth has accelerated and has recently reached the rate of two new employees a day, a job-creation phenomenon unusual in New York for half a century. DoubleClick closed out 1999 with more than 1,300 employees and a spanking new headquarters on the West Side.

Other companies grew just as fast. Agency.com, founded in 1995, employed 220 people in September 1998, 670 a year later, and more than 1,000 by the time it went public late in 1999. StarMedia more than doubled its ranks from 400 workers when it registered to go public in the middle of 1999 to 900 workers at the beginning of this year. As these businesses have expanded rapidly, they have moved their hiring beyond technical workers into support areas, building up sales and marketing forces, accounting staffs, and other departments that provide jobs for New Yorkers without advanced computer skills. For instance, InterWorld employs about 325 people in New York, but only 120 are in software development. DoubleClick has about 280 people in software development locally, but hundreds more in support jobs. Traditional businesses have been hiring New Media workers rapidly, too. The New York Times Company now employs more than 300 people just devoted to its online efforts.



The buoyant public markets also prompted many traditional businesses to spin off their web operations, providing a window into the job growth that was occurring. Barnes & Noble established its web operation in early 1997, and by the time the company announced it was spinning it off, in March 1999, the unit employed 700 people. DLJdirect, the Manhattan-based online operation of the Donaldson Lufkin and Jenrette investment bank, employed only 140 people at the end of 1995 and 374 by the close of 1998. But last year it more than doubled its workforce to 865 people.

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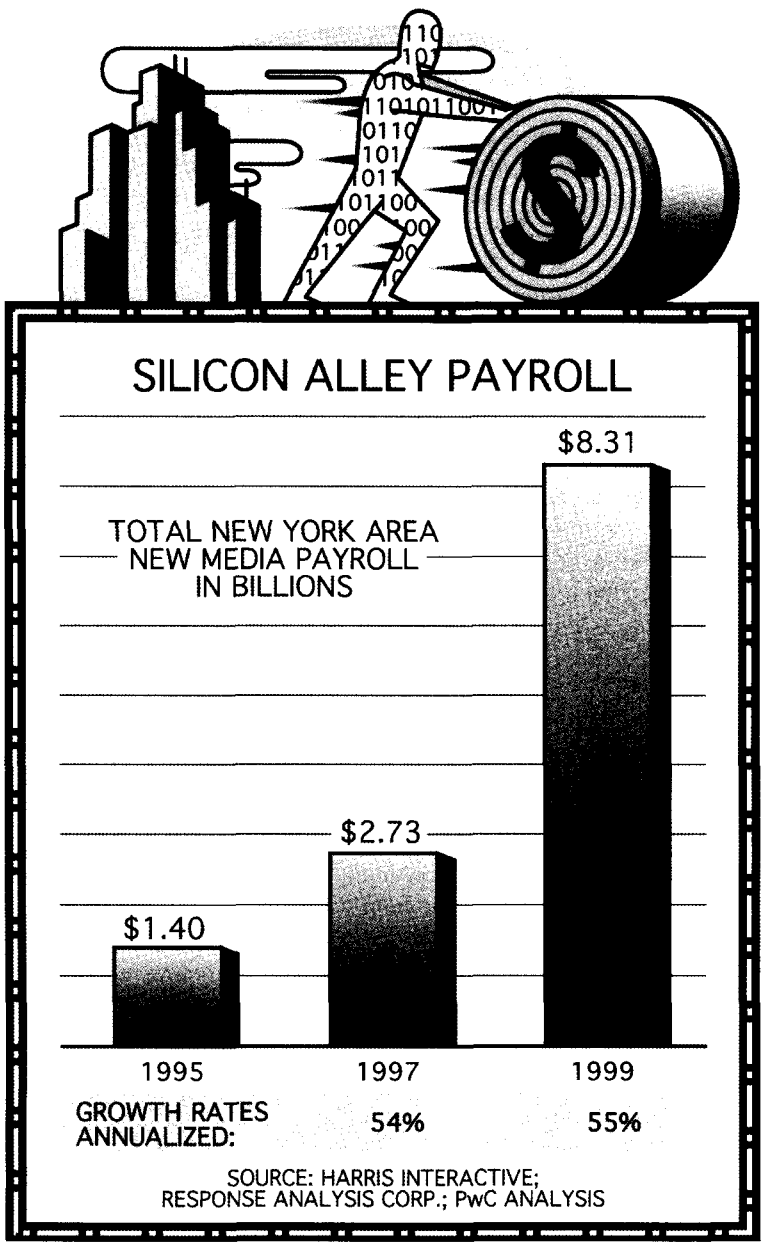
Despite these impressive job numbers, doubts arose about whether New York was really emerging as a New Media leader or was simply riding the wake of a national trend. In late 1998, Federal Reserve Bank of New York economists concluded that, while the industry was significantly fueling the local economy, it was premature to call the city a center of the digital age yet. The computer-services jobs category, as defined by the federal government, has a much bigger impact on Silicon Valley's economy than on New York's, the study noted. But computer services alone is a poor proxy for New Media, the economists acknowledged, because so many Internet companies are not classified as computer businesses, and further analysis might raise the city's industry ranking.



A study by the city comptroller's office, taking a longer view, reached a different conclusion. From 1992, when the city's digital-age economy began to emerge, until mid-1999, computer-services jobs in New York increased nearly threefold, to more than 43,000—double the national growth rate. By dramatic contrast, in the previous seven years, computer-services jobs grew at a slower rate in the city than throughout the rest of the country. The numbers suggest that the formation of the New Media industry in the early 1990s helped turn New York from a laggard in the technology field into a national leader.

But as the New York Fed's economists had cautioned, computer-services employment alone doesn't tell the story. The federal government's Standard Industrial Classifications system for counting jobs by industry is obsolete and is now being replaced. The system has no way of classifying some of the newest Internet companies. Instead of being counted as technology firms, many have been grouped under more traditional industry classifications. DoubleClick, for instance, bears an SIC code as an advertising company, and all of its 1,300 jobs are counted as advertising jobs. HotJobs.com is classified as a staffing business, and Jupiter Communications as a research and con-

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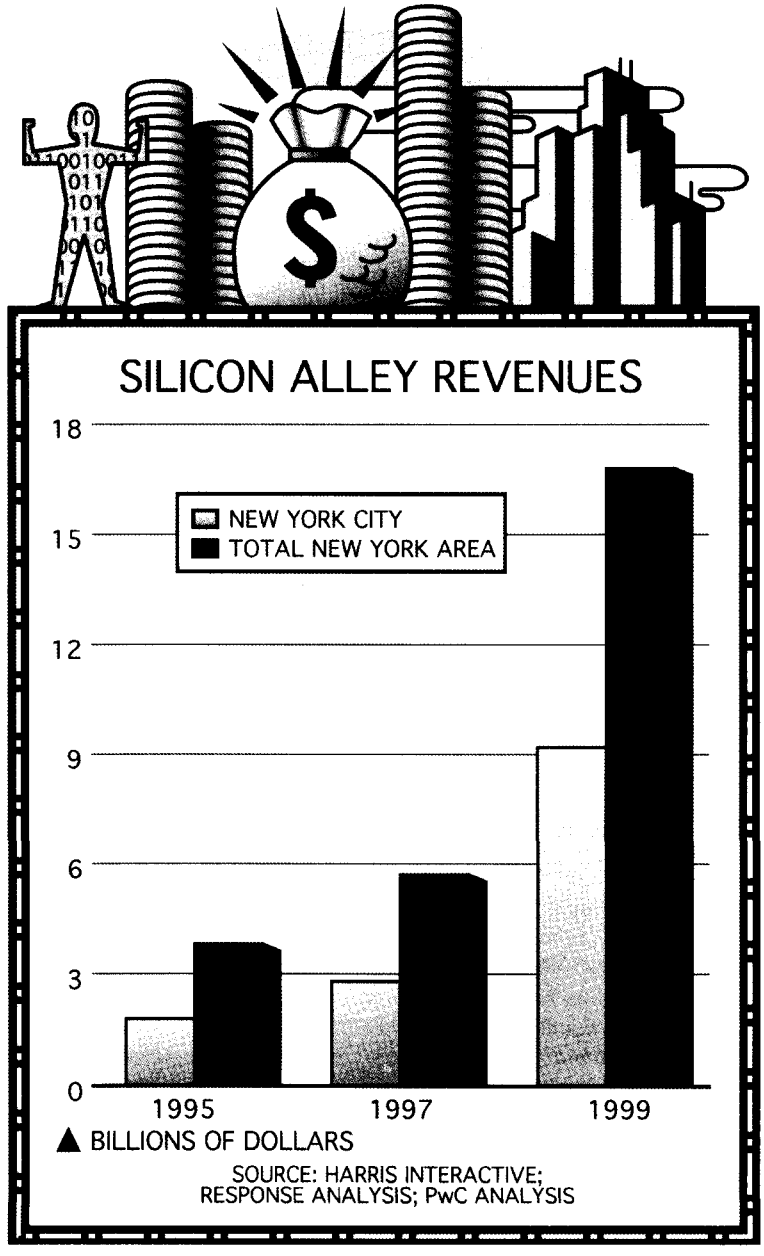
sulting company. But what really ties all these businesses together is the Internet.

Classifying digital companies in these ways has given a distorted view of the city's economic revival through the late 1990s, making it look like the old, familiar scenario of increased Wall Street employment, supplemented by expansion in the consumer industries and rapid growth in business-services jobs. But nothing in the old model of the city's economy can account for the unprecedented employment growth of 1998 and 1999, when the city added more than 175,000 jobs—even though Wall Street hiring slowed. Investment firms added just 13,000 jobs in the city in two years. Even considering the vast earnings power of Wall Street—which, economists say, produces two jobs in other New York industries for every one that Wall Street itself creates—the securities industry probably accounted for only about a fifth of the city's new employment since 1998.

The March PricewaterhouseCoopers study, which tracks down jobs at Internet companies—despite the government data's inadequacies—and comes up with a total of 138,000 New Media jobs in the city, gives irrefutable proof of Silicon Alley's newfound heft. But jobs are not the only measure of the industry's growth. Last year, the Citizens Budget Commission found that New York had more registered domain names—electronic addresses on the Internet—than any other city in the country, including San Francisco and Los Angeles, indicating the large volume of Gotham's online activity. New York has also emerged as one of the foremost cities for incubating Internet businesses, as measured by the number of local businesses able to make it to the public markets. Last year, 37 New York Internet companies went public, compared with 19 New Media IPOs in the Boston/Route 128 corridor and 23 in the entire state of Texas, reputedly a hot location for technology companies. Those companies were scat-



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tered among cities like Houston, Dallas, and Austin, as well as in the suburbs.

Even comparing New York with Silicon Valley is eye-opening. In 1999, 127 Internet companies went public in California, a truly impressive number. But those companies were mostly spread across the state's suburban landscape: only 16 were in San Francisco proper, and another 13 in nearby San Jose. These numbers suggest an unusual, if not unique, position for New York in the digital revolution. In other hot areas, the growth is largely coming in the suburbs, with some spillover into nearby cities; in New York, the New Media revolution is more of an urban affair, with a spillover into the suburbs.

Why? Much of the industry's growth in New York has sprung from the desire of New Media businesses to be close to one another and to their customers, from Wall Street to Madison Avenue. Despite the virtual nature of the product these businesses produce, their way of operating has been remarkably similar to that of other service businesses such as law firms or ad agencies—lots of face-to-face meetings and intense client contacts. "If you are 45 minutes from your clients in this industry, you get the business. If you are three hours away, you don't," says William Schrader, chief executive of PSINet, the Virginia-headquartered Internet provider that has already opened one office in New York and is planning a second, bigger facility.

"Tech firms account for the entire gain in New York City's commercial real-estate market in 1999."

This dynamism is reshaping the city's commercial real-estate landscape. A study of office leasing in New York last year by the RealtyIQ real-estate research organization found that technology companies—led by Internet firms—took out leases on 3.8 million square feet of space during 1999. That made technology businesses the second-biggest renters of new office space last year, behind only financial companies. More significant, perhaps, is the trend. Other major industries in the city—including Wall Street—leased less new space in 1999 than the previous year. But technology firms more than tripled the space they took. Tech firms account for the entire gain in the city's commercial real-estate market in 1999.

The dot.com expansion has been a boon to struggling areas of the city. Since late 1995, when the city and state offered incentives to lure New Media companies to downtown Manhattan, office vacancy rates in the old financial district have declined to 8.9 percent from over 20 percent. The average price per square foot of space there has increased 40 percent, to nearly $35 a square foot. Areas like SoHo and TriBeCa, among the first neighborhoods to attract New Media firms, now boast office vacancy rates around 5 percent. Today, Internet firms are eyeing areas once considered unsuitable for offices. In 1999, for example, DoubleClick leased 150,000 square feet on West 33rd Street and 11th Avenue for its new headquarters. At the beginning of this year, Global Crossing took more than 200,000 square feet at 11th Avenue between 46th and 47th Streets for a website maintenance and hosting facility.

Many of the city's traditional service businesses—from law firms, accountants, and personnel agencies to restaurants and hotels—have expanded to serve Silicon Alley. Sometimes, the battle over the new business has been fierce. Several major San Francisco law firms experienced in technology companies—including Brobeck Phleger & Harrison, Morrison & Foerster, and Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe—were quick to recognize Silicon Alley's potential and to open Manhattan offices. Brobeck Phleger has served as the counsel on some of the most important public offerings of local Internet companies, including DoubleClick and Multex.com. In response to the San Francisco invasion, top New York law firms such as Proskauer Rose and Kaye Scholer Fierman Hays & Handler have created their own technology practices. One result of this face-off was a ferocious salary war between New York and San Francisco firms earlier this year that drove up wages for a first-year associate in the city to $135,000 a year.

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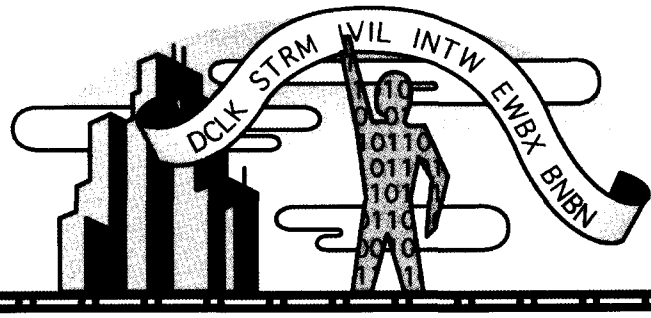

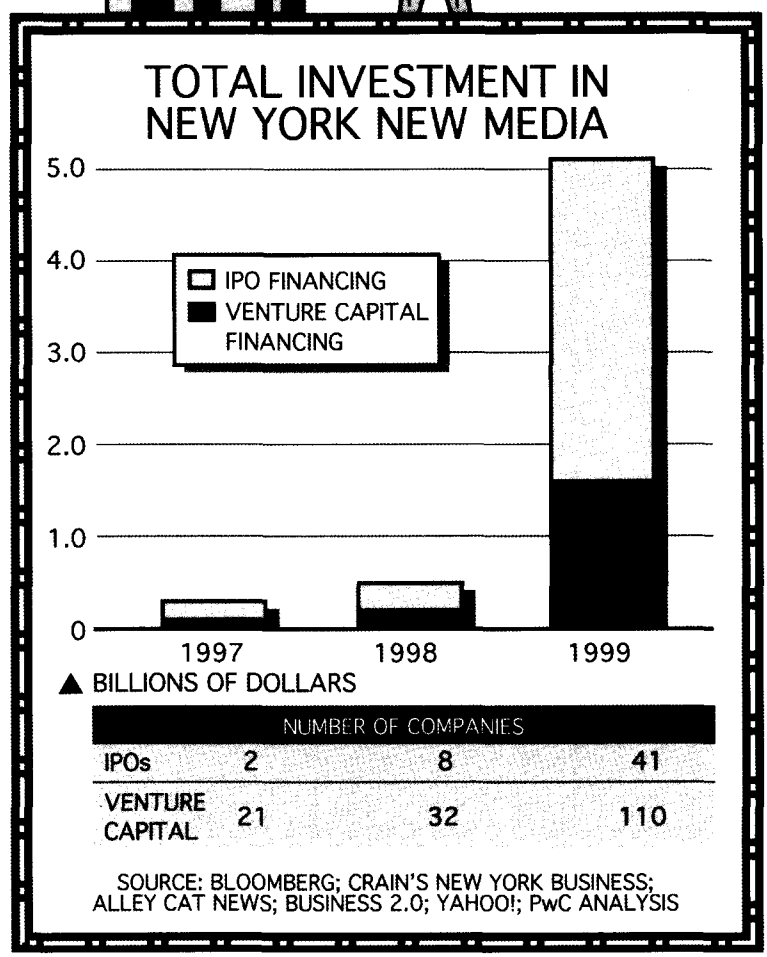

Of course, as more city businesses come to depend on revenues from the digital world, the local economy's vulnerability to a downturn in the industry grows. And as the gyrations of the Nasdaq this spring have demonstrated, the industry is extremely volatile. Some of the first-generation local Internet firms to go public are still burning cash rapidly and are nowhere near profitability. A number have seen their shares plummet, suggesting that some may be unable to go back to the market for secondary offerings. Investors have abandoned, in particular, website designers and online retailers. Some observers predict that as many as three-quarters of these companies might have to go out of business or sell out to traditional media companies.

Signs of trouble are everywhere. The founders of the globe.com have already been pushed aside for new management. *Barron's* recently placed EarthWeb on its list of Internet firms in danger of running out of cash, although EarthWeb disputes that notion. The board of iVillage recently hired a new chief executive amid reports of shareholder dissatisfaction with founder Candice Carpenter. E-commerce firms like iTurf and Fashionmall.com have seen their share prices plunge as their losses widen and competition grows from well-funded traditional retailers going online.

A significant stock-market downturn would slow the explosive growth of the biggest publicly held New Media companies in New York and depress hiring throughout the industry. An extended market downturn would hit two of New York's key industries hard, cutting into Wall Street's profits, while depriving digital companies of the capital they need to keep expanding. The next recession in the city may be a result of such a one-two punch.

But beyond the stock-market headlines, there's also much to suggest that the great digital revolution isn't simply going to go away and that it will remain an important shaper of the local economy.

While some of the city's New Media companies use up their financing in a race to grab market share online, many others are quietly turning profits. More than half of area New Media businesses surveyed by PricewaterhouseCoopers were in the black in 1998. More than two-thirds of that group said it took them two years or less from their founding to begin earning money. "There are more than

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8,500 New Media companies in this region that are not publicly held, and they have been growing and becoming profitable," says venture capitalist Brian Horey. "Even if we have a fairly lethargic public market, the industry will do just fine."

The city's long-term prospects are also promising, because most experts believe that the business-to-business sector of New Media continues to have the greatest growth and profit potential, and New York's traditional strength and expertise in this sector have proved triumphantly transferable to the Internet world. In familiar New York fashion, companies such as InterWorld, which makes software that runs electronic retailing sites, and DoubleClick, with its ad network, prosper by helping other businesses work more effectively, as do firms like Arbinet and e-STEEL, which run electronic trading sites that businesses use to find the best prices on goods and services. InterWorld projects that the digital business-to-business market will grow fivefold in the next four years, and InterWorld president Jeremy Davis expects his own workforce to grow by 75 people, to a total of 400 jobs by year-end. "We hire a lot of programmers from the banking and financial industries, because they are used to creating mission-critical, bullet-proof software," Davis says. "This is a talent pool that is here in New York."

"Gotham has suddenly emerged at the forefront of one of the hottest trends in the nation's economy."

In addition to attracting fledgling New Media firms that see the opportunity to serve New York's many important traditional industries, Gotham has also drawn in established, well-funded technology companies from elsewhere, who have come here to be near their major Wall Street and Fortune 500 clients. The PricewaterhouseCoopers survey found that 20 percent of New York's New Media operations are units of companies founded or headquartered elsewhere but relocated here. That's up from 12 percent in 1997.

One indication of where the city's New Media economy is going is the recent decision by PSINet to open a huge web-hosting facility here that will employ 300 people. Virginia-based PSINet is a $500 million Internet provider that serves big corporate clients. Despite the wonders of the virtual world, PSINet decided that it needed several Internet facilities in the New York region to service its Wall Street and corporate customers. The company has zeroed in on Long Island City for its first facility. It expects competitors to open four or five similar centers in the region.

These and other trends bode well for the new economy's continued growth in New York. But the city faces several important challenges to keep the new jobs coming.

So far, Manhattan accounts for most of the growth, with five times as many New Media companies as the other four boroughs combined. But with Manhattan getting prohibitively pricey for start-ups, city officials should clear the way for the next generation of digital entrepreneurs to go to boroughs where commercial space is cheap and plentiful.

As a start, city hall recently offered $2.5 million to landlords in eight newly designated high-tech districts—seven outside of Manhattan and one in Harlem—to help market their buildings as homes for tech companies. But the program offers no other inducements to entice the landlords to invest up to $50 a square foot—or $25 million for a 500,000-square-foot building—to do the necessary upgrading and rewiring. City Council speaker Peter Vallone and others have reasonably suggested that, to encourage developers to make the speculative leap, the city should offer tax incentives similar to those of the 1994 downtown revival plan that helped lure New Media firms to lower Manhattan (in an ideal world these tax cuts would extend to the entire city). As part of this program, the city is also thinking of threading high-speed telecommunications cables to the outer boroughs through a disused water-main system. More ambitious, but much more problematic, is Senator Charles Schumer's plan to see if public/private partner-

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ships could develop large-scale technology projects outside of Manhattan.

As the city looks to keep the new economy growing, it should follow through on promises it has made to change the extremely frustrating way its tax code treats many of these businesses once they become profitable. One target of the industry is the city's commercial rent tax, the only levy on rents in the nation. Under its new lease, for instance, DoubleClick must pay about $2.8 million in rent tax over the next 15 years. The Giuliani administration has eliminated the CRT everywhere in the city except Manhattan's main business districts and has committed the city to end the CRT for Manhattan companies, too, in fiscal year 2003, when Giuliani will no longer be mayor. It will be important for the next mayor to follow through on Giuliani's plan.

Similarly, the city will have to change the way it treats small, private companies that organize as unincorporated businesses or as Subchapter S corporations. A Subchapter S corporation pays its profits as dividends to its owners, and the profits are then taxed as part of the owner's personal income. Because the city doesn't recognize this form of ownership, Subchapter S corporations are effectively taxed twice in New York: their owners must pay the city's personal income tax on company profits, and the company must pay the corporate tax on profits, too. Small New Media companies just starting to register profits hate these taxes—enough to make them consider leaving town. The Giuliani administration's preliminary budget for fiscal 2001 proposed recognizing Subchapter S corporations and increasing the tax credit it offers to owners of unincorporated businesses, but it later withdrew the proposals—a mistake that needs rectifying.

The city's New Media industry has also complained long and loud that the city's primary phone company, Bell Atlantic, has been slow to bring new services and technologies to New York and is responsible for a severe shortage of the telecommunications capacity vital to digital businesses. For example, in other cities, the company began offering DSL service—which allows users to access the Internet at much faster speeds than using traditional phone service—in 1996. In New York, the service wasn't operational throughout the city until after the turn of the millennium. Public officials need to do more to open this marketplace to competition.

Alternate phone companies have tried entering the market, and they have made some headway in signing up large clients and rewiring big office buildings. But competitors have charged that Bell Atlantic, which still controls the basic telecom infrastructure in the city, has been slow to process orders to switch customers to them and has charged too high a rate for competitors to rent Bell Atlantic's existing lines. Under pressure from the FCC, Bell Atlantic cut its rental rates this spring by over 80 percent for other carriers that want to offer DSL service in New York. New Media industry leaders have been pressuring public entities—such as the often slow-moving state Public Service Commission—to take more actions like this, and a 1999 report by the New York City Comptroller's office backs them up.

When New York's current economic expansion began so tentatively in 1994, economists wondered how the city could possibly recover the more than 300,000 jobs it had lost in the devastating recession of the previous four years. No new job engine loomed on the horizon, and business leaders doubted that Wall Street alone could provide the necessary vigor. Then, virtually out of nowhere, New Media materialized, recognized only during the last year as something much bigger than an evanescent fad. With the strong boost it got from digital companies, New York has added more than 300,000 jobs in the last five years, boosting its total to 3.6 million jobs, the same level as 1988, the employment peak of the eighties (though still 200,000 jobs below the city's 1969 historical job high). After years of watching the rest of the nation boom, Gotham has suddenly emerged at the forefront of one of the hottest trends in the nation's economy. It is a startling turnabout—to be cherished and nurtured. ■

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The Coming Digital Polis

The Information Revolution is poised to transform how government operates. Will the politicians let it work its beneficent magic?

Stephen Goldsmith

For more than a decade, information technology has been transforming American business and remaking the global economy, creating Herculean efficiencies. But the one place slow to respond to the digital revolution is government. It has yet to streamline its transactions and disseminate information efficiently, let alone flatten its bureaucracy or restructure its organizations, in the way that electronic technology has made possible in corporate America.

Now, however, information technology is like a big wave curled over government and about to break. Presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore have promised, if elected, to make digitizing federal government departments a priority. A few leading-edge states and cities are already launching interactive websites that overflow with useful information and efficiently deliver services. High-tech companies, including the one I chair, are inking important agreements with all levels of governments to bring them up to twenty-first-century dot.com speed. Public sector spending in the U.S. to accomplish this, predicts the Gartner consulting group, will rocket from an already significant $1.5 billion to $6.2 billion by 2005.

Digitizing government promises to have hugely positive consequences. It will allow us to shrink expensive, bloated public sector workforces through automation. It will boost government's efficiency and make it more responsive to citizens and businesses. But we shouldn't underestimate the ferocious resistance that such transformations will unleash. Public employee unions won't want to see their power diminished. Bureaucrats will stonewall before they allow their empires to shrink. It will take real political leadership to explain the potentially epochal benefits of e-government and create a consensus for change.

The expanded choice and convenience that information technology has already given consumers in the private sector is bound to change their expectations about government services. No so long ago, for example, you'd rush to the bank on Friday afternoon to cash your check. If you didn't make it before 3:00, too bad: the bank closed for the weekend. Now, the automated teller machine gives you access to your money 24 hours a day, every day, while cutting your bank's cost from around $2.93 to 27 cents per transaction. Thanks to the Internet you can buy virtually anything online, from anywhere in the world, at any time, and have it quickly delivered to your doorstep. The newly empowered consumer is starting to wonder why government is often so dysfunctional and sloth-like in comparison.

The answer, of course, is that government is a monopoly, so it doesn't feel the competitive pressure to innovate that businesses feel every day as they struggle to prosper in the marketplace. Change comes slowly to government. So while private industry began to automate back-office functions in the 1950s, entering payroll or accounting data into big, mainframe computers, government only timidly began this kind of automation in the sixties, the era when Ross Perot made his fortune by using computers to process Medicaid claims under government contract. But remarkably, even this relatively primitive automation didn't really kick into gear in government until the mid-1980s.

Backroom automation is still going on and has produced significant savings. Last year, the federal government delivered more than three-quarters of its payments through electronic funds transfers (EFT) instead of paper checks. When they complete their conversion to EFT, the feds will save hundreds of millions a year in reduced paperwork. Recently, West Virginia put all of its 45,000 state employees on a single $1.6 million online payroll system. Instead of waste-

Illustrations by Arnold Roth

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fully shuffling paper reports back and forth between each state agency and the auditor's office, payroll clerks log on to the Internet to do data entry and correct mistakes. Potential savings to the state: $250,000 a year.

In the mid- to late 1990s, a few pathbreaking governments and agencies began to draw on information technology's remarkable power in a second way: to analyze and use government-collected data more effectively and disseminate it easily and quickly.

Law enforcement is a big beneficiary of the computer-enhanced use of information. Famously, in 1994, the New York Police Department under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani rolled out Compstat, a computerized system for tracking crime statistics—perhaps the key tool, experts believe, in Gotham's remarkable crime-busting success. Other cities, such as New Orleans, have followed New York's lead and set up Compstats of their own, winning impressive reductions in crime. Texas just launched a computerized Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Detection System that searches for suspicious patterns of behavior among providers and patients. In its first nine months, it turned up nearly $3 million in suspected overpayments that fraud investigators had missed. Chicago has newly outfitted its meter maids and traffic cops with sophisticated hand-held computers that they can use to check license-plate numbers against a database of parking scofflaws. The city is now booting 1,100 vehicles weekly, a 40 percent increase over last year. Many law-enforcement agencies have installed mobile computers in police cruisers to tap into traffic violation and felony-warrant data. In the near future, they'll also allow cops to match downloaded mug shots to suspects. DNA "fingerprinting" information has gone online, too, and in time will allow cops to match samples against a vast national database, as in the U.K.

"Every in-person or phone transaction converted to an online one saves government between $40 and $400."

With the rise of the Internet, government has made easily available to anyone with a computer lots of the information at its disposal. Nearly every federal, state, and local government or agency has its own regularly updated website. Though a new Anderson Consulting study on e-government points out that less than 50 percent of the nation's government-published information is available online, the amount of data these websites are putting at one's fingertips is exploding. Citizens can use them to find out about everything from community-college courses to job openings to park locations. Businesses can look at them to discover local zoning ordinances and other business-relevant information.

The best websites provide useful information that until now was hard to obtain. Want to know how your kid's public school measures up academically? Texas parents can log on to a government website and compare schools' average scores on the state's standardized tests. Worried your surgeon is a hack? Rhode Island has just launched a searchable online database of the licenses of the state's doctors, dentists, and other health professionals that includes any licensing violations they might have accumulated, and the New York legislature has just voted to provide full educational data and malpractice suit information as well. Keen on avoiding food poisoning? New York City posts Health Department inspection results for the city's restaurants. The site averaged 45,000 hits an hour during its first day.

Giving citizens such easy, one-click access to important knowledge helps ensure accountability and consumer protection. The fear of having a health-code violation for vermin posted on a heavily trafficked website is more likely than city fines to spur a restaurateur to clean up his act. Arming parents with information about the performance of their kids' public schools lets them make smart educational choices and puts greater pressure on the poor public schools to get better.

The Internet's unique ability to disseminate information is another effective law-enforcement tool, too. Trying to make slumlords comply with local nuisance and housing codes, Toledo, Ohio, has just posted on its website a marvelous page called "Houses of Shame," listing the names and address-

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es of owners of ill-maintained, crime-plagued properties. Public humiliation has worked wonders: *Governing* magazine reports that seven of the first 12 landlords named to the House of Shame have brought their properties into compliance with the law within two months of appearing on the list; two others are hastily trying to sell their seedy buildings. "They don't like it, and they consider it harassment," remarks Mayor Carelton Finkbeiner—"but it was meant to embarrass them."

A very few state and local governments and federal agencies are beginning to use information technology in an exciting third way, turning to dot.com-style interactive websites and other high-tech inventions to automate and streamline day-to-day interactions with citizens and businesses, saving time and money—lots of it.

Substantial efficiencies are there to win. As American government vastly expanded its role during the second half of the twentieth century, mountains of paperwork and endless lines waiting to apply for or renew licenses, permits, and registrations became inescapable facts of life. "Our business is paper," Michigan secretary of state Candice S. Miller matter-of-factly explained a while back. "We are a business that does 18 million transactions a year. You want to think about why there are lines?" The wastefulness of all this is extraordinary. At the extreme end of the spectrum, a recent audit of the Brooklyn, New York, Office of the City Register (an office that handles real-estate documents) turned up close to 100 boxes of long-unprocessed papers, including $26 million in uncashed checks—costing the city more than a quarter of a million dollars in lost interest.

Government could save billions if it handled more of its business over the Net. Individuals and firms do about $600 billion a year in government transactions; less than 1 percent of it currently takes place online. Anderson Consulting estimates that every in-person or phone transaction converted to an online one saves government between $40 and $400 in paper and labor costs, which represents, according to other estimates, a 70 percent savings.

With such huge potential cost-cutting, it's small wonder that new high-tech firms—including such relative newcomers Netgov (the company I chair), govWorks, and the National Information Consortium, along with such older giants as Dell, IBM, and Hewlett-Packard—are rushing to build and maintain new, interactive websites to handle government transactions with the public. These technology companies, in lieu of fat up-front payment for building the sites, usually settle for a fee levied for each online transaction or for permission to sell ad space on the site. Some critics fear that the private companies might turn around and sell the personal information they obtain when running the sites; governments must reassure citizens that their confidential data remain tightly secure.

Governments may gain the biggest efficiencies by using the Net for procurement. Typically, when government needs to buy something or contract with a vendor, it advertises in a local paper or in business publications—at least when the process is truly open. Buying media space is pricey, though, so government purchasers as a rule don't run many ads, and few responses come in. It's all too common to get a subpar deal that drives up the cost of government.

Internet procurement allows government to create a better market, reaching a much larger group of vendors. After Dallas started to use the Net for procurement, the city received 17 or 20 bids on some requests, on which it used to get two or three. Orange County, California, has done even better by procuring over the Net: from seven or eight bids on a solicitation in the pre-Internet days, it now gets as many as 70 bids. When governments are sellers, the technology-expanded marketplace is no less a boon. New Jersey cities sell tax liens via the Internet, significantly increasing the number of potential buyers.

A larger pool of vendors, drawn from a wider geographical area, means heightened competition, and that means that government gets a bigger bang for its buck. "We get better-quality product," Dallas chief information officer Dan McFarland recently told *American City and County*. The price is usually cheaper as well. Last year, Pennsylvania purchased nearly 1 million tons of road salt for $30 million through an Internet auction (run by a private firm), saving $2.5 million. Private sector firms that have switched to Internet procurement report savings of up to 70 percent. If Ford can save $1,000 on each car it produces through e-procurement, imagine the savings for government at an equal level of efficiency.

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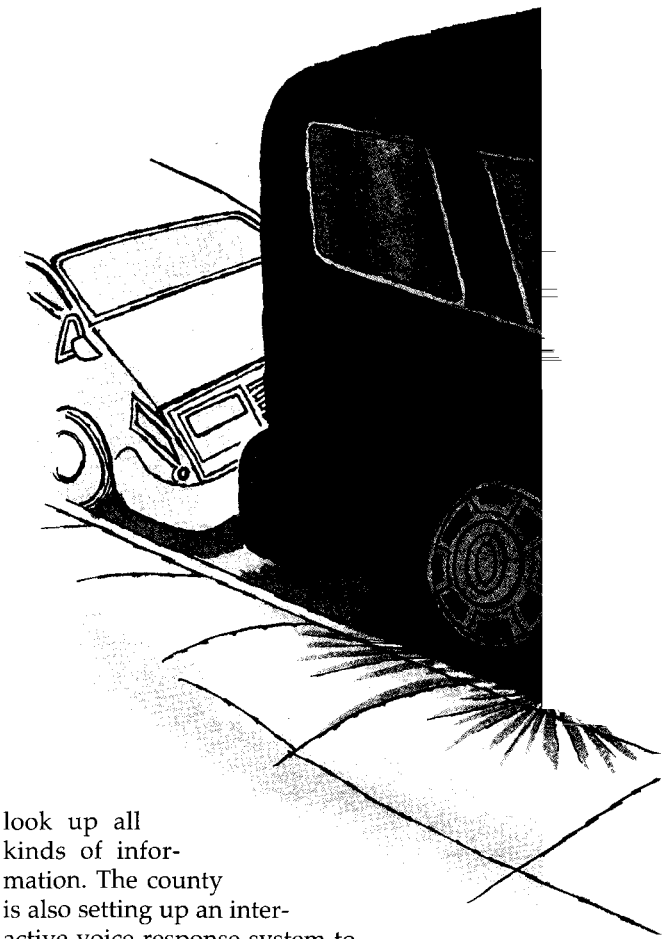
The Internet substantially reduces the cost and fuss of licensing and registering. For 2 percent of the fees for each transaction, IBM designed and hosts a fancy site for the state of Arizona that residents can use, credit card in hand, to re-register their cars online in three minutes instead of the exasperating 45 minutes it once took at the Department of Motor Vehicles. For the 15 percent of re-registrations done online, the state has sliced its processing costs from $6.60 to $1.60 per car, pouring back $1.7 million a year into state coffers. In Maryland, members of 40 professions can renew their licenses online; last year, 40 percent of the state's professionals due for renewal did so, shaving upward of $2 million off the usual processing costs. In Georgia, accountants and real-estate agents, among other professionals, get a 25 percent discount if they register online; even with the discount the state has saved $350,000 a year. Instead of nervously traveling to an often-distant auditorium to sit down for their two-day licensing exam, nurses across the country can now take the national test by computer at their school's computer center.

Registering and licensing are just two of the many different transactions government is starting to handle online. These days, you often can log on to the Internet to pay parking tickets, apply for permits, and register for—or even take—classes at state universities. On the federal level, in 1998 nearly 25 million Americans filed their taxes with the IRS electronically. The Postal Service lets residents file change-of-address forms on the web. Companies can in many cases submit regulatory filings online with the Federal Communications Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and other agencies.

What about folks who can't afford computers? The typical Internet user in the U.S. makes more than $50,000 a year; in some states, less than 20 percent of the population surfs the web. Isn't there a risk that many people will find themselves missing out on digital-era efficiencies?

Fairfax County, Virginia, one of the most electronically advanced governments in the country, has a clever solution. The county has installed touch-screen kiosks in 18 locations, including libraries and shopping malls, where computerless citizens can do most of the things others are doing on its state-of-the-art website: pay tickets, download forms, and look up all kinds of information. The county is also setting up an interactive voice response system to handle over the phone many of the transactions that it has put online.



Fairfax County's example illustrates an important fact: the Internet isn't the only new, digital tool for streamlining government interactions with the public. States and cities have started to issue "smart cards," electronically encoded with data unique to the cardholder, to recipients of public assistance, who can use them to access a range of benefits with a minimum of bureaucratic fuss.

New information technology has sped up rush hour by streamlining government's transactions with commuters. In many cities, "Metro Passes" get you on public buses and subways with a swipe through a computerized till, which debits the fare from the electronically encoded balance on the card. There's no more waiting in line to purchase a token. For highway tolls, electronic "E-Z Passes"—tiny transponders that drivers hang in their windshields—do the same thing, ending tollbooth traffic snarls. Taking further advantage of such "smart" passes, San Diego has experimented successfully with congestion pricing—drivers pay extra during peak traffic hours—to untangle horrendous traffic snarls on an eight-mile stretch of highway outside of the city.

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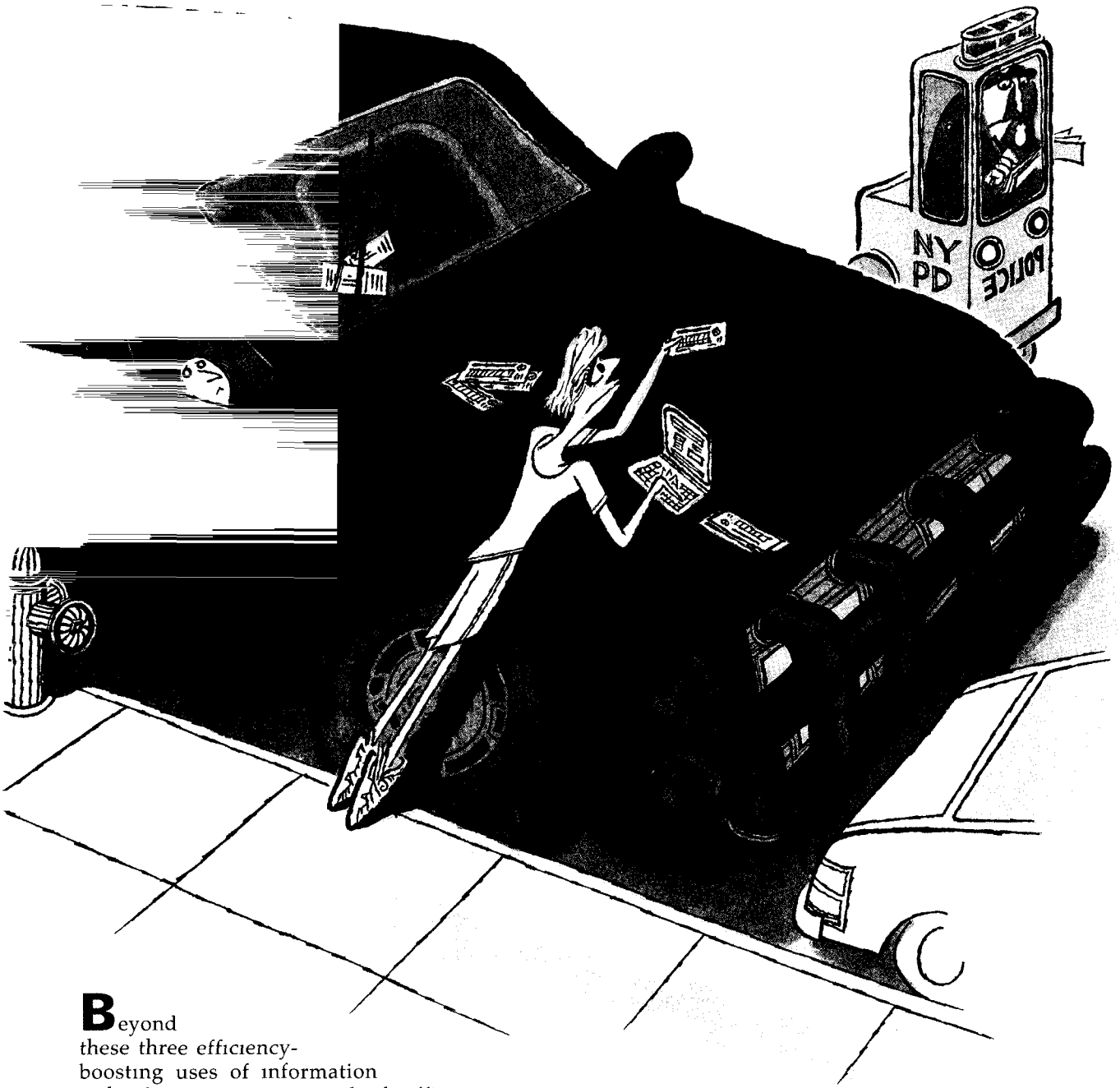

Beyond these three efficiency-boosting uses of information technology—to automate back-office functions, to disseminate information and use it more effectively, and to streamline and automate typical government business with the public—there's a fourth, far more radical, way government can exploit digital technology. So far, though, it's mostly on the horizon. But used to its full potential, information technology could enable us to restructure government dramatically, reducing its size by an order of magnitude while at the same time making it serve the interests of citizens and businesses with a market-like efficiency. Were this to happen, it would be a transformation every bit as dramatic and positive as the restructuring of the U.S. economy in the Reagan and Bush Sr. years.

That epic experience carries an important lesson for e-government's future. Remember that, when corporate America spent $1 trillion on computer hardware in the eighties and early nineties, the big productivity boost it expected didn't materialize at first. Firms were just using the new digital gizmos to automate existing processes—basically what most e-government initiatives have done so

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far—instead of rethinking their practices from the ground up to draw fully on technology's productivity-enhancing might.

But with hungry Asian competitors threatening their marketplace dominance, American firms began to innovate fiercely. They used digital technology to flatten porcine bureaucracies, getting rid of layers and layers of middle managers, whose function had been to package and forward information that computers could package and route much more efficiently. They transformed their inventory and distribution systems with computer-aided just-in-time delivery. And they used the technology to improve quality by giving line managers and workers more responsibility. After painful corporate downsizing and restructuring, U.S. firms emerged lean and muscular, producing better products at lower cost, faster, more flexibly, and often more closely tailored to the individual customer's wants.

"A bold use of technology for government would avoid automating archaic processes or needless regulations."

What would a similarly bold use of technology mean for government? First, it would avoid automating archaic processes or needless regulations. As a recent report from IBM's Institute for Electronic Government put it, "[Government] can become hugely efficient at doing the wrong thing."

I learned this lesson the hard way as mayor of Indianapolis in the 1990s. I was determined to reduce the time it took to issue a building permit and sought a way to streamline the antiquated and time-consuming system of chasing down yellowing records. A well-intentioned middle manager, aware of my penchant for outsourcing government activities, hired an outside engineering firm to computerize the permit area with the greatest backlog: drainage approvals.

Twelve months and $600,000 later, we'd sped things up only slightly. I confronted the owner of the engineering company and asked him about the anemic results. He responded calmly that he had accomplished exactly what we had asked him to do: review drainage permits and help put them online. Had we asked him to improve the permit time as a whole, he would have given us a host of suggestions, among them having building plans and permit applications submitted together electronically and then processed concurrently by the relevant bureaucracies—easy to do with computers. He would have advised us to reduce the number of permits builders needed. Three years later, we had consolidated permits and initiated concurrent reviews. Waiting times fell by two-thirds.

This is a new-millennium approach that states and cities have just begun to take in their dealings with would-be entrepreneurs. Starting a business isn't the easiest thing to do in many U.S. locales. Before an entrepreneur can open his doors, he must navigate a maze of licenses and permits issued by agencies on all levels of government. Between figuring out the right forms and waiting for approval, it can take months to get started. To start a business in heavily regulated New York City means spending nearly $10,000 on expediters to get things moving. "That's real money to a new, small business," notes Hudson Institute regulatory expert Irwin M. Stelzer.

Smart governments want to revolutionize this obsolete, pre-information-age approach to entrepreneurship. Suzanne Peck, chief technology officer for Washington mayor Tony Williams, proposes "cradle to grave" online services for businesses. What might this mean? Imagine, says Allan Dobrin, New York City's Commissioner for Information Technology, if everything an entrepreneur needed to launch a new business were in one place in cyberspace—a "virtual agency," accessible on your city's website. It would override time-wasting bureaucratic boundaries. The entrepreneur would fill out just one online form, press a button, and the computer would instantly fill out all the applications for the requisite city, state, and federal licenses and permits. "You'll put in your electronic signature, your

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credit-card number to pay the fees, and you'll be done," says Dobrin.

The appropriate personnel would review the applications at the same time on their computers, instead of sequentially. Ideally, instead of waiting months, the entrepreneur gets the green light in hours. New York wants to have this business-friendly system up and running soon. The city's digital plans for the future are "phenomenal—on the cutting edge," says Cathiliea Robinett of the Sacramento-based Center for Digital Government, and several other states and cities, including Pennsylvania, Washington State, Indianapolis, and D.C., are moving fast in the same direction.

Those that don't will eventually commit economic suicide, observes Janet Caldow, director of IBM's Institute for Electronic Government. Today's savvy high-tech entrepreneurs "want a government that can interact with them at the speed of commerce in their world," she stresses—and they'll look around at different cities and states until they find it. Illustrative of Caldow's point is DBS International, a firm that designs computer hardware for corporate customers. Seeking to expand its operations, the company just moved to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, from Flemington, New Jersey, in part because of Pennsylvania's digital-speed business climate. "We closed the purchase on our building in the morning; we had a building permit by noon," DBS founder Bill Bachenberg told the *New York Times*. "In New Jersey, we'd still be waiting for a permit."

This is impressive stuff, but there is yet one more radical level of reform, as I learned when I set out to automate burglar-alarm permits in Indianapolis. I was troubled by the tedious process of having people fill out and mail in permit requests, which government workers would then have to spend time processing before mailing the approved permits back. I insisted that the system go online. Fortunately, the firm I hired to do it argued that we didn't need permits at all. Why not just require the companies that installed the alarms to register each one with the city over the Internet? Just like that, we peeled away a whole layer of bureaucracy. Imaginative use of technology removed a bureaucratic nuisance on home owners and still allowed the city to limit false alarms by threatening to cancel the registration of home owners who had too many.

The lesson I learned is that technological change gives us the opportunity and impetus to rethink government's role. After all, we often go on doing things the same old way, even if it isn't the best way to proceed, until we're jolted into trying something different. There are some things government doesn't have to do at all, as my burglar-alarm experience brought home to me. And the last four decades have taught us that government does many things poorly—from treating wastewater to building schools to helping the down-and-out. It makes more sense to turn these activities over to the market entirely or, in the case of providing social services to the needy, to hire successful faith-based institutions to do the job. The Information Revolution makes it markedly easier for government to contract out many services, for the continual flow of electronic information allows government to supervise contractors closely for quality and compliance. In Indianapolis, it allowed us easily to measure the speed and care with which Last Chance Towing removed abandoned vehicles from city streets.

Information technology offers enormous possibilities for informed civic participation, too. Some city and state governments are already using the Internet to foster citizen input. In Indianapolis in 1996, we set up a pioneering, award-winning website that featured the city's budget, polling places, and opportunities to contact city officials and express opinions. Madison, Wisconsin's new city website lets residents look up city ordinances and review council meeting minutes. Soon, they'll be able to give their two cents on city policy over the web. Senators Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Fred Thompson (R-Tenn.) have just kicked off an interactive website that solicits suggestions from voters on how the federal government can best take advantage of the Internet.

One state has gone even further. In the Arizona Democratic primary this past March, state residents for the first time could cast ballots over the Internet. Strikingly, nearly 40,000 Arizonans, almost half the total number of those who voted, did so. Though it raises the troubling specter of policy makers reacting unreflectively to instant feedback and polls, digital democracy is clearly the wave of the future.

Finally, the hallmarks of the New Economy—speed, innovation, vigorous competition, a dizzying array of consumer options, and a dedication to cus-

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tomer service—don't have to be foreign to government. A fully digitized government could provide public services as seamlessly and dependably as today's business world does. Such a government would customize itself to the individual's personal choices and convenience: a citizen would be able to define what information he wants from government, when he wants it, and how he will receive it. He'd be able to ask government for zoning notices, new building-permit requests, even crime reports in his particular neighborhood, and get them almost instantly via e-mail. Residents of a city or town could, if desired, receive e-mail reminders when their permits expired or other obligations became due.

Citizens could keep close electronic watch on government's effectiveness. If someone wanted a pothole filled, he'd be able to send his request via the Internet directly to the work crew assigned to his neighborhood instead of to the central Department of Public Works. Performance measures would be instant and obvious to supervisors: how long did the citizen have to wait for a response and a solution to his problem?

To talk about e-government as if it were inevitable begs a huge political question, however: what about the resistance of the government workers whose jobs would become obsolete? Candidate Al Gore's tech-

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nology advisor Robert Atkinson estimates that digitizing government could cut the size of the federal workforce by 25 percent over the next decade. The reductions could be even greater on the state and local level, where the public has 90 percent of its dealings with government. The labor unions are already up in arms. "Our view is that electronic tools should augment, not replace, government employees," Rebecca Feaster of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees recently told *Fortune*.

Of course, a decrease in the membership and the strength of public-employee labor unions doesn't mean that government workers, especially with their additional layer of civil service protection, are going to be oppressed. In fact, information technology will make the jobs of many government workers more interesting and less mechanical, just as technological changes in the private sector empowered line workers and made use of their hitherto untapped knowledge. In Indianapolis, for example, trash collectors wanted to have computer terminals installed next to their time clocks, so they could look at citizen complaints online and e-mail me directly with proposed solutions. They had all sorts of bright ideas about how to pick up garbage more efficiently.

Their supervisors, though, had little interest in shaking up the long-settled arrangements that justified their authority. And, in fact, foot dragging by agency satraps will be a key obstacle to realizing e-government's full potential. Each government bureaucracy tends to be a fiefdom, whose chiefs are fearful that the efficiencies information technology can bring will shrink their empires, their funding, and their power. As a group, such bureaucratic bosses tend to have a change-resistant mind-set. They tend, like corporate executives of yore, to look at the world from a producer rather than a consumer perspective, and even cooperating with other agencies doesn't come easily to them. For example, when the Small Business Administration tried to a set up a single point of Internet entry for small businesses to interact with all the government agencies they normally have to deal with, jealous agency heads reportedly sank this efficiency-boosting, consumer-friendly proposal without a trace. Gore advisor Atkinson is blunt about how things might change: "Only top-level leadership can overcome the resistance of government bureaucrats to potentially disruptive changes."

A hugely important political struggle looms, in other words, before e-government can achieve its true promise. With more than a quarter of government workers reaching retirement age over the next five years, determined political leadership can solve part of the problem of downsizing government simply through attrition. In addition, a thriving economy will make it easy for government to ease more of its workers into the private sector, where they might just "go out and make more money," as Virginia's secretary of technology Donald Upson recently remarked. But bold and resolute leadership on all levels of government will be essential to make the necessary downsizing and streamlining take place.

The best solution would be to appoint special officials with the power to override labor union and bureaucratic obstacles. Many states and cities have chief information officers, some of whom have considerable authority to push foot-dragging agencies and stubborn unions into the digital future. Candidate George W. Bush's call for a federal information czar to force government bureaucracies to change represents a key difference with his rival, who has shied away from such a bold recommendation—"apparently for fear of public sector unions," *The Economist* recently observed. Gore's squeamishness about union opposition is a major reason his reinventing-government crusade had such lackluster results: federal spending is at an all-time high, half of all federal agencies can't even produce auditable books, and, as the *Wall Street Journal*'s Paul Gigot points out, the American Federation of Government Employees has 17,000 more members than it did prior to Gore's initiative. Ultimately, it's a philosophical difference that goes to the heart of contemporary politics: which is more important, a controlling government with legions of public employees, or the rights of citizens to have maximum control over their own lives?

The hurdles are real enough. But e-government is on the way, and it will change everything. Six years ago, e-government barely existed. Today, millions of Americans can enter the virtual halls of government from their homes and businesses. We need to ensure that when they get there, they find that e-government lives up to its promise of slashing red tape, shrinking bureaucracy, and giving individuals greater control of their lives. ■

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An A for Home Schooling

It's giving 2 million kids a good education, sound values, and a rich family life. If unaccredited parents can do it, why can't the public schools?

Karen Imperato has been home schooling her kids on Long Island for eight years.

Photographs by Erik Freeland, Saba

Brian C. Anderson

Home schooling first showed up on the national radar screen in 1997, when 13-year-old Rebecca Sealfon, all brains and awkward gestures, won the National Spelling Bee, showing a startled public that her unorthodox education must be doing something right. Today, though home schooling accounts for only 3 or 4 percent of America's schoolchildren, the movement's brisk 15 percent annual growth rate has become a powerful, hard to ignore indictment of the nation's academically underachieving, morally irresolute, disorderly, and often scary public schools. Side by side with public education's lackluster results, the richness of home schooling's achievement—the wealth of challenging subjects its pupils learn, the civility it inculcates, the strong characters it seems to form, and the nurturing family life it reinforces—embodies a practical ideal of childhood and education that can serve as a useful benchmark of what is possible in turn-of-the-millennium America.

Though existing data are incomplete, everything we know about home-schooled kids says that they are flourishing academically in every way. This year, home-schooled kids swept the top *three* places on the National Spelling Bee, and Stan-

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ford accepted 27 percent of its home-schooled applicants, nearly twice its average acceptance rate. Small wonder that the public school establishment wants to regulate home schooling out of existence. It represents a silent, but eloquent, reproach to the professionals.

Only 20 years ago, home schooling was a far-out fringe phenomenon. No more than 50,000 children were then educated outside of school, their parents mostly graying hippies who wanted to protect them from what they considered the stifling conformity of "the system." In the early eighties, though, the ranks of home schoolers began to swell with Christian fundamentalists dissatisfied with value-free public schools. Today, the full array of American families—from religiously orthodox Catholics and Jews to thoroughgoing secularists—are joining the fundamentalists and the Age-of-Aquarius types in home schooling their kids.

> **"'The rise of home schooling is one of the most significant social trends of the past half century.'"**

Former Department of Education researcher Patricia M. Lines, writing in *The Public Interest*, estimates that now anywhere from 1.5 to 2 million children are being home schooled, considerably more than the 400,000 students enrolled in charter schools across the country. "The rise of home schooling," Lines judges, "is one of the most significant social trends of the past half century."

What does a typical home-schooling family look like? It is likely to be white (only 6 percent of home-schooling families are minorities) and observantly Christian, with married parents and three or more kids. The parents are likely to be better educated than the adult population at large, and the family will be comfortably middle-class—though either Mom (in nine out of ten home-schooling families) or Dad forgoes a second family income to stay at home. Mom and Dad will probably vote Republican.

The Imperatos of Bohemia, in New York's Suffolk County, fit the typical home-schooling family profile pretty much to a T. Blunt-spoken Joe Imperato, Brooklyn born and bred, works for the New York City Fire Department; his soft-spoken, articulate wife, Karen, teaches the kids, eight of them (aged 11 months to 17 years) . . . and counting. The Imperatos have been home schooling for eight years now, for academic, religious (they're evangelical Christians), and familial reasons. To get a sense of what home schooling was like up close, I went to visit them in late May.

Welcomed into their big white house with a firm handshake from Joe, I felt for a moment—no exaggeration—as if I had entered Laura Ingalls Wilder's little house on the prairie, relocated to a leafy New York suburb. The well-dressed, polite, and cheerful children spill out of every corner of the house to greet me; family portraits and drawings by the kids adorn the walls. The home radiates warmth and good order, from the kids' elaborate chore chart to the piano in the living room to the prominently displayed "House Rules" (Rule No. 1: "I Will Not Argue with Mom and Dad").

Recovering from my intrusion, the Imperatos' home school soon bustles. The family has converted one section of the house into three makeshift classrooms. There's a narrow room with a long counter for the younger kids, three of whom, 12-year old Julie, Philip (9), and Peter (7), return to math after saying hello; a wider room humming with slightly bruised computers where Luke, 14, is doing a grammar program on CD-ROM; and a third, "quiet" room, where the older children can read. Books pile on shelves in each of the rooms, and everywhere you turn there's something to engage the mind—a wall poster time-lining major events of world history, globes, and educational videos.

The school day, Karen explains, begins promptly at 9:00, after breakfast and chores, and can last, with breaks, until 4:30. She hovers over the

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younger children, making sure they're working and helping them with difficult problems; Luke and 16-year-old Christine don't need much supervision. Last week, Karen informs me, the whole family dissected a frog as part of a complete science lesson purchased from an educational vendor, formaldehyde-soaked amphibian and dissecting tools included. To teach their children, the Imperatos use a mix of pre-designed curricula, including the excellent Saxon Math program, and their own improvisations. The children do well academically, says Joe; Karen beams that Philip is the equivalent of a grade ahead in math. Speaking with Luke about his American history lessons, I'm surprised at how well-informed and thoughtful he is for his age.

Though family is central for the Imperatos—the children clearly revere their folks, and Mom and Dad are proud parents—the kids do plenty outside the house, too. Christine is an accomplished pianist and Luke is getting there with the violin. They both play classical music in a home-school orchestra that meets several times a month. "*Everybody* learns to play a musical instrument in this house," laughs their father. Three of the kids, including Julie, play Little League baseball. Every month, the family spends an afternoon at the Bowery Mission helping the down-and-out. Field trips and outings with other home-schooling families are frequent. The Imperatos also participate actively in the life of the Gospel Community Church in West Sable.

I left impressed: if home schooling is responsible, even in part, for such a seemingly happy, thriving family and bright, well-mannered children, it's a big success.

The No. 1 reason that most families first decide on home schooling these days, surveys show, is dissatisfaction with the academic quality of the public schools. "A lot of parents say, 'I'd be happy to trust the local school system with the education of my kids—except that they haven't learned to read yet,'" says Susan Wise Bauer, co-author, with her mother, Jessie Wise, of *The Well-Trained Mind*, a remarkable compendium of information designed to help home-schooling parents give their children a traditional liberal education. "Something has changed in the schools for the worse over the last 20 years," believes Catherine Moran, director of a national network for Catholic home schoolers. "They're dumbing down the kids, and the teachers aren't of the highest caliber, to say the least."

Sabrina and Gary Matteson's story of their son Myles's public school woes is typical. Several years back, Myles, bored crazy with third grade at the New Hampshire public school he attended, begged his parents to let him stay home and read more challenging books—"a request from a kid that a parent shouldn't simply ignore," says Sabrina. When the Mattesons informed the school principal that they were going to home school their son, the honest administrator couldn't blame them. "He told us that they had to teach to the 40th percentile," Sabrina remembers—meaning that classroom instruction geared itself to the worst students, and sharp kids like Myles lose out. Trapped in dull public school classrooms that do nothing to engage their minds, the Myleses of the world frequently tune out or become disruptive. Even American Federation of Teachers president Sandra Feldman admits that public schools have to do more to challenge smart kids or risk losing them to home schooling.

Home schoolers' misgivings about the public schools aren't just based on isolated cases. As education reformers William J. Bennett, Chester E. Finn Jr., and John T. E. Cribb Jr. underscore in their recent book, *The Educated Child*, the public schools have suffered at least since the mid-seventies from watered-down assignments and exams, politically correct textbooks, incompetent or lazy teachers who can't be fired because of union protection, and trendy educational fads like "New Math" that have pushed aside the three Rs. It's a toxic brew, the authors argue, that has left only one out of three public school fourth-graders reading "proficiently," 40 percent of public school eighth-graders unable to do basic math, and public school 12th graders the worst in the industrialized world in science.

Why not send the kids to a competitive private school? Most home-schooling families can't afford it, even when a good private school is available

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nearby. *Weekly Standard* literary editor J. Bottum and his wife, Lorena, have decided to home school their daughter, Faith, in part for economic reasons. "My wife and I are typical, I think, of that shabby-genteel class of people with more education than money and greater aspirations than resources," says Bottum. "At some point we realized that we would never be able to afford to hire anyone else to give our daughter the level of schooling with which we'd be satisfied."

But this may be to construe too negatively what for many home schoolers is an inspiring educational mission: to regain the vision of excellence that has vanished from so much of American education. Indeed, the brisk sales of Bauer and Wise's *The Well-Trained Mind* point to the longing of many parents to educate their kids in the great riches of the West that too many public schools value so lightly. Most of the home schoolers I encountered were learning Greek, Latin, and other serious subjects that most public schools have abandoned, and their history lessons emphasized imagination-stirring biographies of great, world-transforming men and women instead of the abstract and inhuman historical forces that so many dry-as-dust public school textbooks stress.

The rise of home schooling has sparked an explosion of marvelous curricula based on the ideal of a comprehensive liberal education. Upstate New Yorkers Melissa and David Fischer, both Cornell grads, home school their three children, 15, 14, and 12, with the help of one such curriculum. It's a "unit" study program, provided by the evangelical Christian educational firm Konos, that organizes studies, month by month, around common themes. (Secular and Catholic firms offer equally impressive curricula.) When I talked with the Fischers, they were exploring ancient Greece with Konos. After morning prayer, Melissa, who does most of the teaching, read and discussed Homer with the kids; later in the day, after math and before piano lessons, the family studied Greek history and even a bit of ancient Greek, at each child's own level. Konos is meaty stuff, using great books, the study of languages, and intelligently designed study guides for parents. Many home-schooling parents told me that they enjoy learning along with their kids, filling in gaps in their own educations.

Frequently, home-schooling parents design their own curricula. When done right, they can be imaginative and substantial. Kenneth Robinson, a lawyer by training, is one of the rare fathers who stays at home to teach (his wife writes and illustrates children's books in a wing of their pleasant Ware, Massachusetts, home). His self-designed curriculum uses "the best books I think available." Whitney, his 13-year-old daughter, begins her day with pre-algebra math, and then moves on to reading—Arthur Conan Doyle's collected Sherlock Holmes stories and C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* are currently on the plate. Then it's time for logic. "I stress thinking skills and the ability to reason correctly, so we spend time looking at arguments and critiquing them for logical fallacies," Robinson says. In the afternoon, Robinson and his daughter were tackling Frederick Bastiat's writings on socialism's flaws.

Home schooling, families say, allows you to tailor your educational approach to a child's interests, innate gifts, and learning style. This kind of flexibility can go too far: some in the small but growing "unschooling" wing of the home-schooling movement, inspired by 1960s educational radicals like John Holt and Ivan Illich, think that *any* adult direction will crush kids' creativity, so that parents should just facilitate whatever their children want to learn, whenever they want to learn it—replicating at home the trendy folly of the "child-centered classroom." But, kept within limits and balanced with fundamentals, a flexible approach can ignite a child's love of learning.

Lisa Kander is a Michigan home-schooling mother with four kids, ranging in age from ten to 18-year-old Beth, who now attends Brandeis University in Massachusetts on full scholarship. All of Kander's children read, write, and do math far above grade level. She attributes their success to home schooling's flexibility. "Home schooling allowed our four children to reach a 'readiness moment' for reading skills on *their* timetables, not on an arbitrary curriculum chart," Kander says. With one child, that moment came earlier than average; with another, later.

Home schooling can take much less time than classroom schooling, since you don't have to stand

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Home schooling has tightened the bonds of the Imperato family, seen here, from the left: Luke (14), Peter (7), Emily (3), father Joe, Philip (9), mother Karen, Amanda (11 months), Julie (12), Christine (17), Samuel (5).

in line, spend an hour at recess, or wait for the slowest student in class "We can get accomplished in three hours what it takes a public school days to cover," says Sabrina Matteson. Freeing up time lets many home-schooled children devote lots of energy to interests like music. Two of Matteson's home-schooled children are gifted musicians: Myles, now 16, plays the bagpipes and his elder brother Tyler plays eight instruments, including the piano and the sitar. Almost every home-schooling family I talked with had musical children. Sixteen-year-old Piper Runnion-Bareford,

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home schooled in Deerfield, New Hampshire, practices the harp four hours a day, something that wouldn't be possible, she says, if she attended public school. Her effort—"pure joy," she says—has landed her the harpist's position in the New England Conservatory Youth Philharmonic.

Even a well-designed curriculum, along with great flexibility and efficiency, can't always substitute for expertise or for access to expensive facilities, such as science labs, that public and private school kids take for granted. For difficult subjects like advanced languages or upper-level science, most home-schooling families outsource, with the children enrolling in community-college courses or seeking out tutors in the fat home-schooling bulletins published these days in almost every part of the country. For example, Mary Eagleson, a retired college science professor in White Plains, New York, does a booming business as a science and math instructor for home schoolers, converting her porch into a makeshift science lab. In some states, including Washington and Iowa, home-schooled students can even enroll in public schools part-time, in order to take advantage of school facilities or sports programs. The schools receive partial state funding for the part-timers.

"On standardized tests, home-schooled kids score better than 70 to 80 percent of all test-takers."

All this sounds good, but how exactly do home-schooled children measure up academically to their counterparts in public and private school? The National Education Association—focusing, with its typical disingenuousness, on inputs rather than outcomes—has passed a testy resolution demanding that home-schooling parents go through "the appropriate state education licensure agency" and use only curricula "approved by the state department of education" before they receive state permission to home school. After all, if any dedicated parent can home school effectively, the teachers' unions' and ed schools' claim to the special, credentialized skills of "teaching professionals" collapses.

And indeed, the data show that the legions of parent-teachers are succeeding solidly. The largest study so far, authored for the Home School Legal Defense Association by respected University of Maryland statistician Lawrence M. Rudner, examined some 20,000 home-schooled students from 50 states. These students scored higher on standardized tests than public and private school students in every subject and at every grade level. The longer their parents had home schooled them, the better they did. The results shocked the left-leaning Rudner, who initially believed that home schoolers were a bunch of "conservative nuts." He has changed his mind.

On standardized national tests of skills and achievement, Rudner found, home-schooled kids score better than 70 to 80 percent of all test-takers. Even more striking, he observes, "By eighth grade, the median performance of home-school students is almost four [grade] levels above that of students nationwide." By 12th grade, home-schooled students scored way up in the 92nd percentile in reading. Rudner cautions that his study doesn't compare home-schooled children, whose parents are generally richer and more educated than average, with equivalent public and private school kids. Moreover, the families whose kids he studied all sought testing materials from fundamentalist Bob Jones University, so they are a skewed sample.

Recent statistics from the SAT and ACT college entrance exams, though less impressive than Rudner's, are still solid. In 1999, students who identified themselves as home schooled scored an average of 1083 on the SAT, 67 points above the national average, and 22.7 on the ACT, compared with the national average of 21.

Sixty-nine percent of home schoolers go on to college, compared with 71 percent of grads from

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public high schools and 90 percent of private school grads. How do they get in without transcripts? Parents will put together portfolios with samples of their children's work and lists of their accomplishments. "If home-schooled students are required to take standardized tests, they take them," explains Cafi Cohen, a home-schooling mother and author of *And What About College?* "If they need a transcript, Mom or Dad sits down at the computer and writes up a transcript, with grades if necessary." More than two-thirds of American colleges now accept such transcripts, though some require home-schooled applicants to submit a GED or additional subject exams, and home schoolers now attend 900 colleges of all descriptions. Harvard accepts approximately ten every year. Oglethorpe in Atlanta actively recruits home schoolers.

Home-schooled undergrads do well, after the initial adjustment. Those who have enrolled at Boston University during the past four academic years, for example, have maintained a 3.3 grade-point average out of a perfect four. "Home schoolers bring certain skills—motivation, curiosity, the capacity to be responsible for their education—that high schools don't induce very well," a Stanford University admissions officer recently told the *Wall Street Journal*. The consensus among admissions officers across the country, a 1997 study reports, is that home-schooled students are academically, emotionally, and socially prepared to excel in college.

Though academic excellence is essential for home-schooling families, two-thirds have chosen this course primarily for religious and cultural reasons. For Joe and Karen Imperato, raising their kids right was crucial. "We want our children to grow up with sound characters and firm values," Joe stresses.

Protecting children from a popular culture overflowing with images of rebellion and sexual promiscuity is a key goal. "Home schoolers know that you don't have to condemn your kids to the kind of educational-formation-by-default in the rotten popular culture that so many parents seem to resign themselves to," remarks University of Tennessee historian Wilfred M. McClay, who has home schooled his two children, ages 11 and 14, with his wife, Julie, for four years now. Home schooling mother Connie Marshner agrees: "You *can* resist the culture that so many horrible TV shows and movies promote today," she says. Home-schooling, she's convinced, helps you take up arms against it: "It allows parents to play more fully the role of cultural gatekeepers," she maintains. Accordingly, only 1.6 percent of fourth-grade home schoolers watch more than three hours of television per day, compared with 40 percent of fourth-graders nationally.

The public schools, these home schoolers believe, fail to shield children from the enticements of McClay's "rotten popular culture" because few teachers and principals offer adult leadership or moral example anymore. "Teachers don't know how to discipline kids today, since they themselves don't believe in authority," Marshner argues. "The sixties destroyed the idea. How can you inculcate character and good behavior—the old idea of deportment—without legitimate authority?" Some teachers even stoke the spirit of rebellion in their young students. Laurie Runnion-Bareford began her journey toward home schooling her kids after a New Hampshire public school teacher told her ten-year-old son that profanities were okay to use in a vocabulary assignment. "It wasn't as if he hadn't heard bad words before," Runnion-Bareford recalls, "but the signal his teacher sent by doing this was that incivility was acceptable—which was unacceptable to us." Many home schoolers, too, find the *Heather Has Two Mommies* and condoms-on-bananas aspect of today's public school regime deeply offensive.

This abdication of authority, social thinkers say, has produced disorderly and uncivil schools, where the peer group sets the terms. "There used to be a social consensus that you don't talk back to adults, you don't spit, you don't swear at the teacher," Marshner says. "All those things start breaking down now in the fourth grade, as kids start taking their cues from their peers and popular culture." Says Catherine Moran of such peer-dominated schools: "Everyone acts the same, dresses the same, and, when they're 12 or 13, pierces the same—and in some cases starts having

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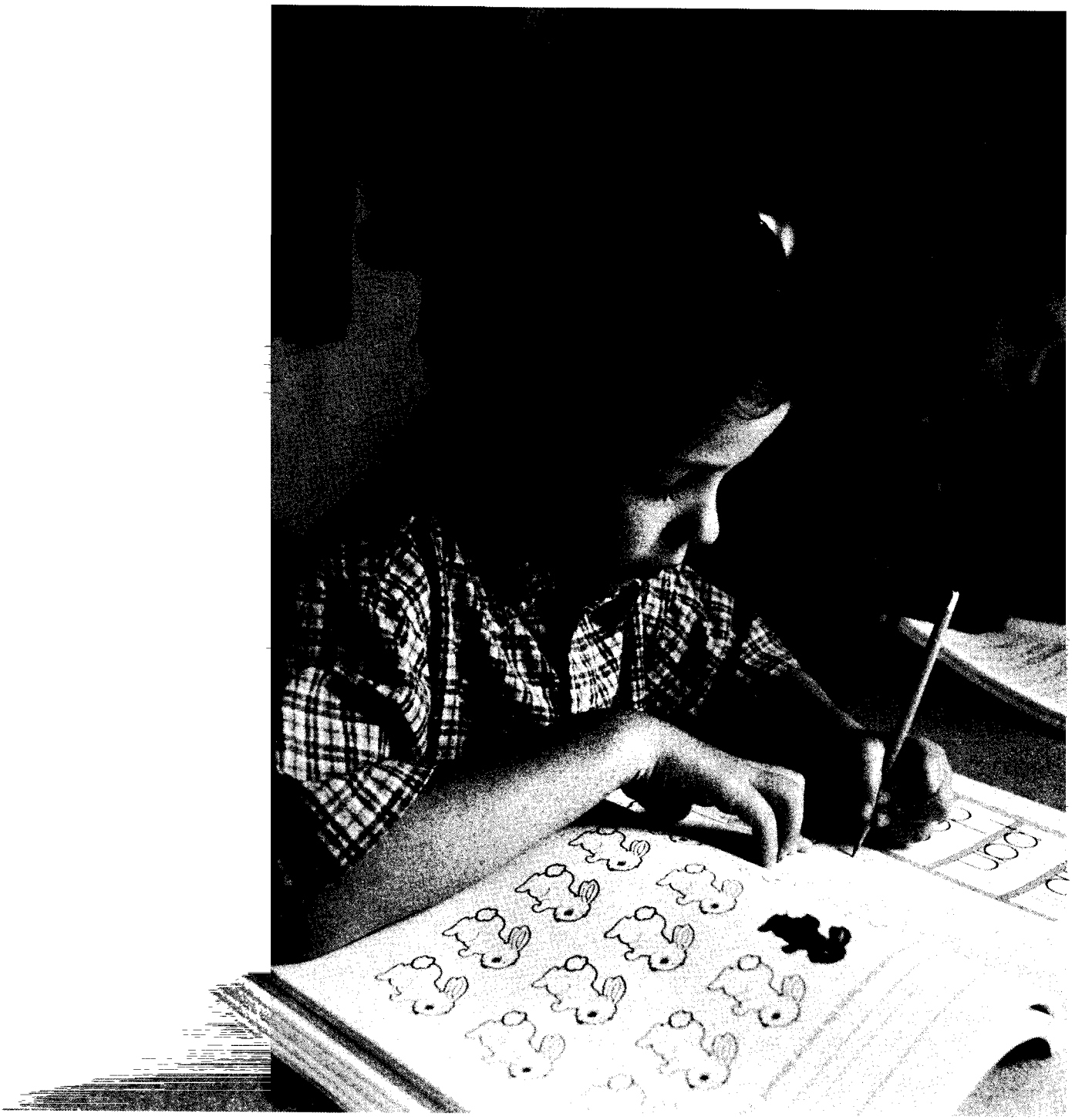

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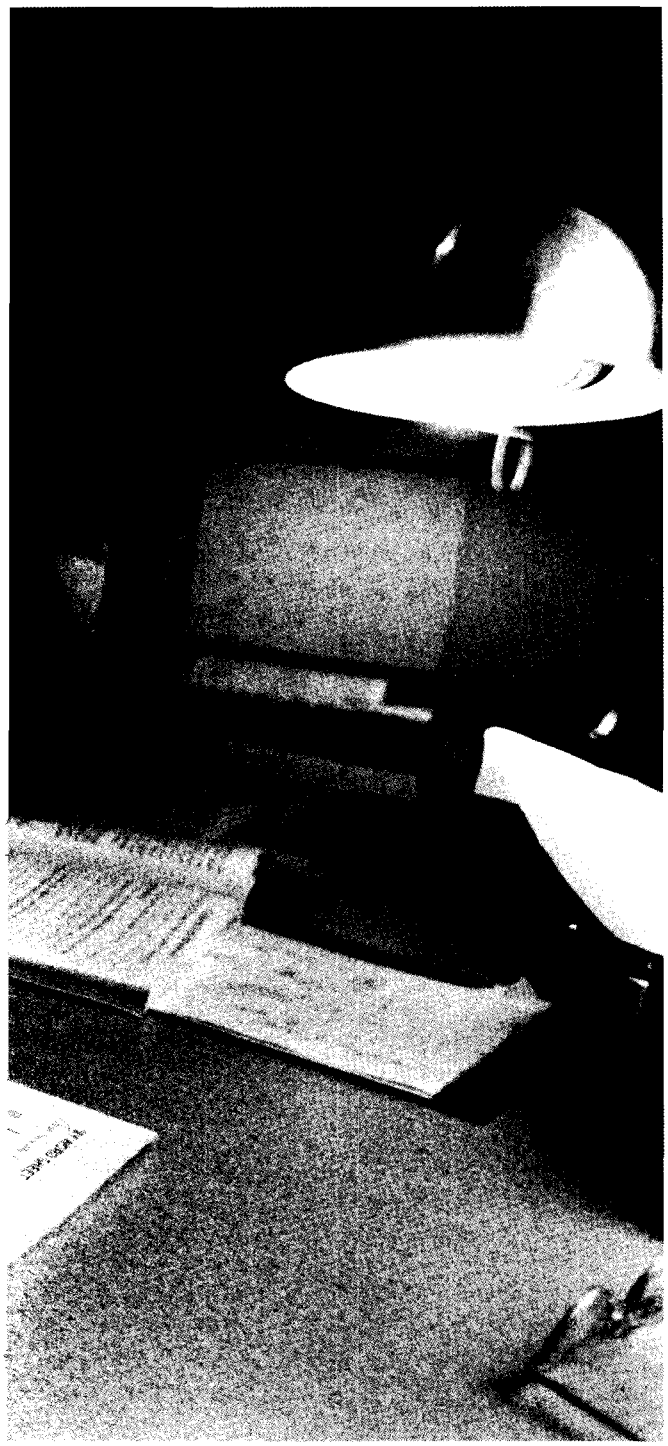

sex or doing drugs." Says social scientist Rudner: "When a nine-year-old comes home with garbage language and garbage values, home schooling makes sense."

Sabrina Matteson sees the Columbine massacre as a watershed for home schooling. "Columbine caused a lot of families and students to assess the safety of their schools," she says. Colorado's home-schooling population rose 10 percent in the months after the killings. Friends of the Mattesons just pulled all their kids out of their local New Hampshire public school after the seventh bomb scare this year.

Critics of home schooling claim that withdrawing children from the classroom will retard their "socialization," to use educrat jargon. Charges Annette Cootes of the NEA-affiliated Texas State Teachers Association: "[H]ome schooling is a form of child abuse because you are isolating children from human interaction. I think home schoolers are doing a great discredit [*sic*] to their children."

Yet social science research suggests that home-schooled children aren't lacking in social skills. Grad student Larry Shyers of the University of Florida videotaped at play 70 home-schooled eight- to ten-year-old children and 70 children of the same age group who attended school. Trained counselors—who watched the tapes without knowing which group the kids belonged to—found only one behavioral difference: the home-schooled kids had fewer behavior problems.

Even a cursory familiarity with home schoolers makes clear that the accusation of isolation is absurd. Most home-schooled kids take advantage of buzzing networks of associations. Beth Kander's busy social calendar as a home schooler before she left for Brandeis is typical. "I never had a problem with friends," she recounts, "since I belonged to the Girl Scouts, participated in several 4-H clubs and youth programs and the drama club my mother started, and volunteered all over the place." Many home-schooled kids join church

Academic, religious, and familial reasons led the Imperatos to choose home schooling.

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groups, play in town sports leagues, do internships, or work part-time. And they form their own associations, everything from poetry recitation clubs to Scandinavian dance groups to home-school orchestras—legions of them.

For their part, home-schooling families reject the model of age-based socialization that the schools offer. "I don't know any adults who would choose to spend eight hours a day, five days a week with 20 to 30 people of exactly the same age," says Glorianna Pappas, a New York musician and home-schooling mother. Instead, home schoolers often meet people of widely different ages and outlooks when helping out at a homeless shelter or singing in a church choir. "This gives them a greater level of poise, experience, and maturity than can be had in the artificial confines of rigid, age-based classrooms," argues educational theorist Andrew J. Coulson.

Still, for home schoolers, family comes first. Historian Dana Mack sees home schooling as an important example of what she believes to be a growing "familist counterculture." This counterculture firmly rejects elite culture's contempt for traditional family values and its celebration of a me-first ethic in pleasure and work that has led to sky-high divorce and illegitimacy rates and a generation of sad and neglected kids. "Home schooling," Mack holds, "is one aspect of a new vision of family life that equates family time with children's well-being, and that puts family intimacy and child-parent bonds before self-realization and economic gain."

For many, home schooling gives family life an unexpected richness. Historian McClay, who watched his teenage son Mark develop a deep love for classical music and leap ahead academically when removed from school, describes the "transformative" impact that home schooling had on his family. "There's this sense that we're involved in a project in life together: the notion that the family is an arrow in time is much more meaningful to me and to all of us than it was before," he says. "We've seen a bonding in our family that we wouldn't have seen if we didn't home school," stresses Joe Imperato. "When you become the teacher, you're really aware of the incredible responsibility you have toward your children."

Home schooling seems to minimize the proverbial friction between teens and their parents. "Life with our home-schooled teens has been a joy—heaven," Laurie Runnion-Bareford enthuses. "It surprised us, because my friends who had teenage kids in the public schools were miserable." But, after all, argues home schooler Douglas Dewey, Chief Operating Officer of Theodore Forstmann's Children's Scholarship Fund, "Not so long ago, it wasn't considered natural or even tolerable for children to rebel against their parents."

It's important not to over-idealize home schooling's impact on family life. It is an enormous investment of time for a teaching parent, and it can lead to burnout. Says Shari Henry, a contributing editor of *Homeschooling Today* and a home-schooling mother of three: "One February, when the weather was bad, I just said to myself, 'I can't keep doing this—it's too much responsibility.'" To avoid burnout, Henry emphasizes, home-schooling parents, particularly those with young children, must give themselves occasional breaks and make certain that they're plugged in to a good support network of other home-schooling families. In addition to this difficulty, home-schooling parents often encounter painful opposition from their own parents or from neighbors and friends. And—one last danger—Susan Wise Bauer, who speaks to home-schooling families across the country, reports that one does occasionally come across a paranoid and domineering parent, afraid of letting go—ever—of the children.

The rise of home schooling has pressured the legal system to accommodate it. "From the early eighties through the next decade, there was a pitched war over whether home schooling was going to be legal at all," recalls Michael Harris, the lawyer and former politician who heads the Home Schooling Legal Defense Association. When his advocacy organization was formed in 1983, home schooling was illegal or strongly discouraged in all but three states, and school administrators and teachers' unions wanted to keep it that way. Parents who tried to teach their

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kids at home frequently faced jail terms and the loss of their children to foster care as school districts cracked down on them for breaking state compulsory education laws.

But because of the HSLDA, which has won virtually every legal battle it has fought, and because of the warm support of Republican legislators, home schooling is now legal in all 50 states, though the degree of state regulation varies. Texas's regulations, for example, are all but nonexistent: home-schooling parents must cover reading, spelling, grammar, math, and good citizenship, but they don't have to keep records or have their kids academically tested annually or follow any rigid timetable. New York's regulations, by contrast, require parents to teach "AIDS awareness," "substance abuse," physical education, and health (i.e., sex ed), among a host of other specific subject requirements, and they must do so on a state-determined schedule; parents must also file detailed quarterly reports with the local school superintendent. (Many states once required home-schooling parents to have teacher certification, but all have abolished that requirement.)

"Many home-schooled kids join church groups, play in town sports leagues, do internships, and work part-time."

Nevertheless, even today, Harris complains, some school districts "just don't get it." This March, to take one egregious example of many, the Richmond County School District sent cops to arrest Gerald and Angela Balderson, after they removed their eight-year-old from his Warsaw, Virginia, public school to teach him at home. The Baldersons had scrupulously given notice to the school superintendent, as Virginia law requires. But the district chose to call out the truant officer on them nonetheless. The Baldersons, understandably, are suing. According to the HSLDA, home schoolers also have to watch out for social workers, some of whom perversely view home-schooling as a "risk factor" in assessing the likelihood of a family to commit child abuse.

Against opposition like this, home schoolers have turned themselves into a formidable political force. California Democratic Congressman George Miller learned this the hard way. In 1994, he offered an amendment to a federal education bill that specified that teachers had to have certification in the subjects they taught. Miller protested that he didn't intend the amendment to apply to home schoolers, but worried home-schooling parents, galvanized into action by the HSLDA, barraged Congress with hundreds of thousands of phone calls. The amendment, which had already made it through committee, got only one vote on the floor—Miller's.

What level of regulation is appropriate for home schooling? The best arguments are on the side of a relatively laissez-faire approach. The New York–NEA model of constant school-district supervision and narrowly specified subject requirements implicitly presumes that the state does a good job educating kids and that parents are ignorant until proven otherwise—dubious propositions. Moreover, some states' subject requirements may offend a home-schooling family's deeply felt cultural and religious beliefs, subverting the very reason they've decided to home school their children in the first place. But the public does have a legitimate interest in making sure that home-schooled kids get educated and that, say, a dysfunctional foster care family isn't yanking its children out of school to use them as laborers. The most sensible regulations would be minimal, requiring home-schooled kids only to demonstrate—through taking a state test or some agreed-upon alternative means—that they were learning how to read, write, and do math by a certain age.

"In America in the twenty-first century," William Bennett recently observed, "no family should feel it has to educate at home to educate well." But until that day comes, home schooling will continue to grow—educating kids successfully, invigorating civil society, and reaffirming family values. ■

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The Texas School Miracle Is for Real

Pundits charge that the Lone Star State's sharply higher reading and math scores are smoke and mirrors. But they are rock-solid —and here's the evidence.

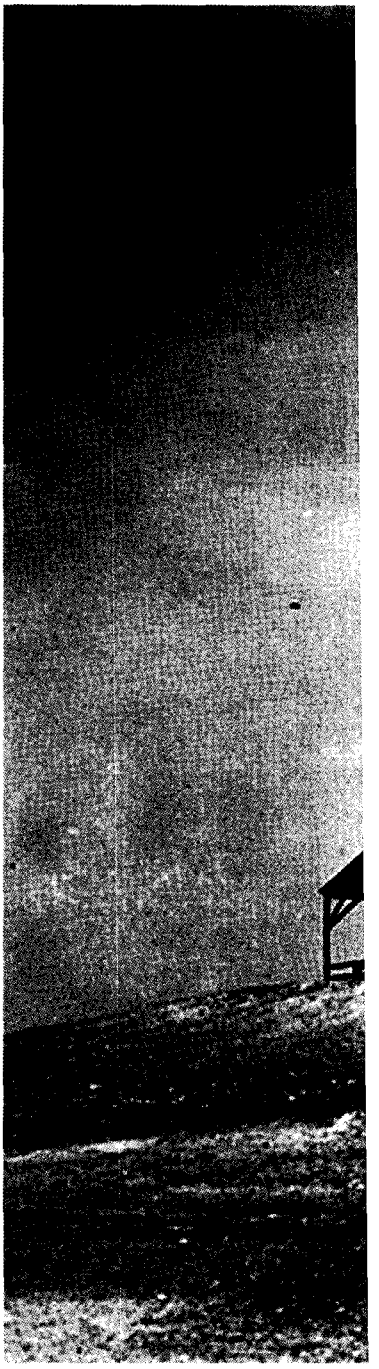
Jay P. Greene

Something surprising happened in Texas during the 1990s: the public schools got better. This might not sound like such a big deal, but it is. Despite a tripling in real per-pupil spending, the nation's public schools have woefully under-performed for decades now. Student scores on national standardized tests have barely budged from the depths to which they had plummeted by the early 1970s; dropout rates remain alarmingly high, especially in dysfunctional urban schools. Texas public school kids, though, have been scoring dramatically higher on standardized tests, and more of them are staying in school—and minority students have shared in the success.

The best explanation for the Texas turnaround: the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), a mandatory, statewide test of public school students in reading, writing, and math, first introduced in 1990 but fully implemented in the mid-nineties under Governor George W. Bush, one of its fiercest advocates. The TAAS holds schools accountable for results: a school's performance on the test receives lots of publicity, so a poorly scoring school's principal and teachers often want to crawl under a rock. Chronic under-performance even raises the specter of state takeover, though it hasn't happened yet. Students have a strong incentive to learn, too: if they don't pass the TAAS tenth-grade exit exam, they don't graduate.

In response to the pressure, the schools seemingly have started to deliver. In 1994, only 53 percent of public school students passed the exit exam. In 1998, 78 percent did—a breathtaking improvement. The pass rate for blacks more than doubled, from 31 percent in 1994 to 63 percent in 1998. Hispanics' rate shot up from 39 percent to 70 percent.

Predictably, as Bush's 2000 presidential candidacy kicked into gear, a cottage industry sprang up to tell you that nothing special happened in Texas public schools on W.'s watch. The Texas "education miracle," the critics argue, is a mirage, and the TAAS is a deeply flawed test. While the naysayers aren't completely off base about TAAS's weaknesses—I was an early critic of the test myself—they're dead wrong about Texas's educational gains. The miracle is real.



ROBERT RUNYON PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION/CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY/UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN (3)

Texas schools, both in teeming urban districts and remote rural areas (as depicted in this 1920 photo), are doing better . . .

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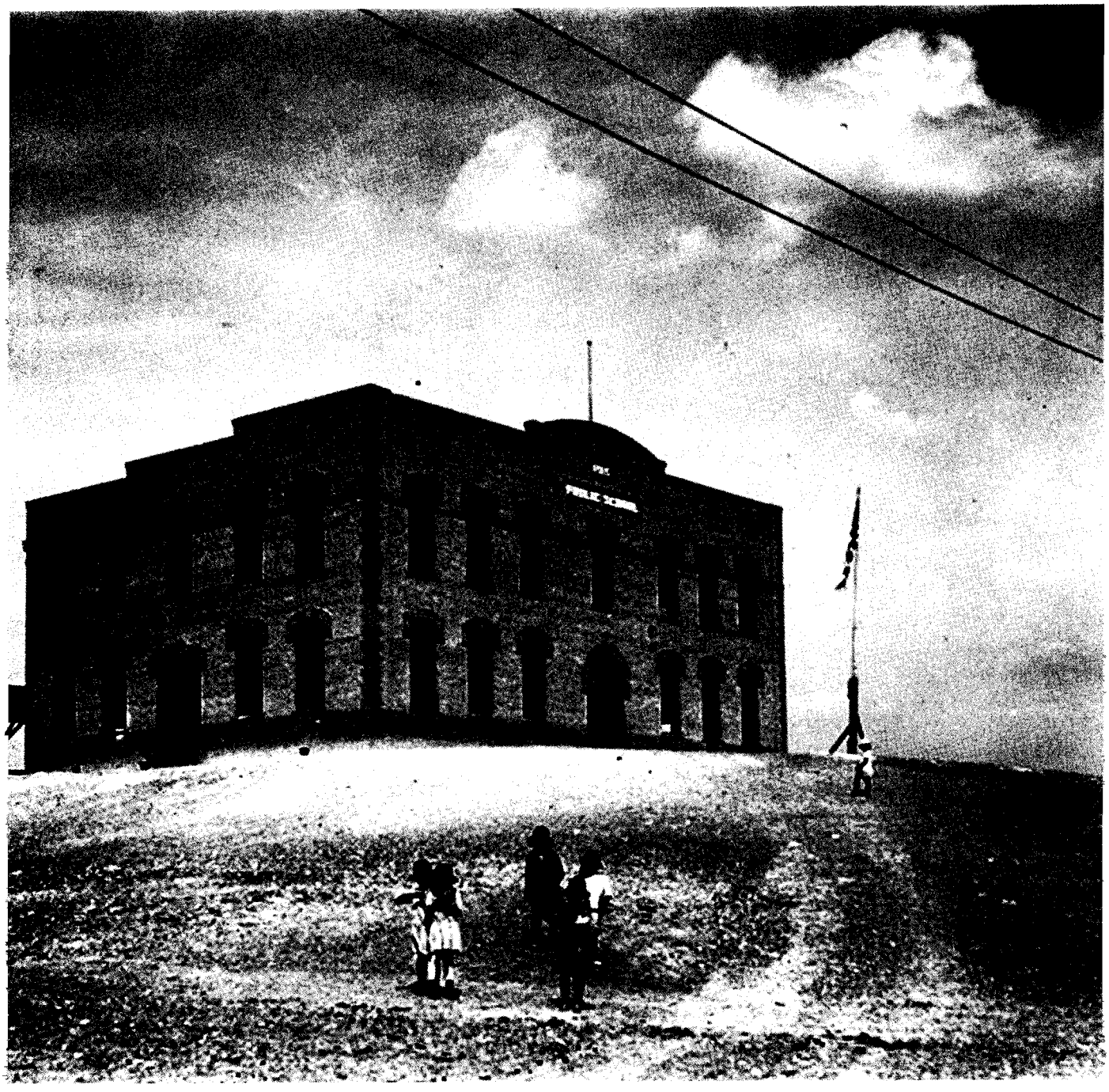

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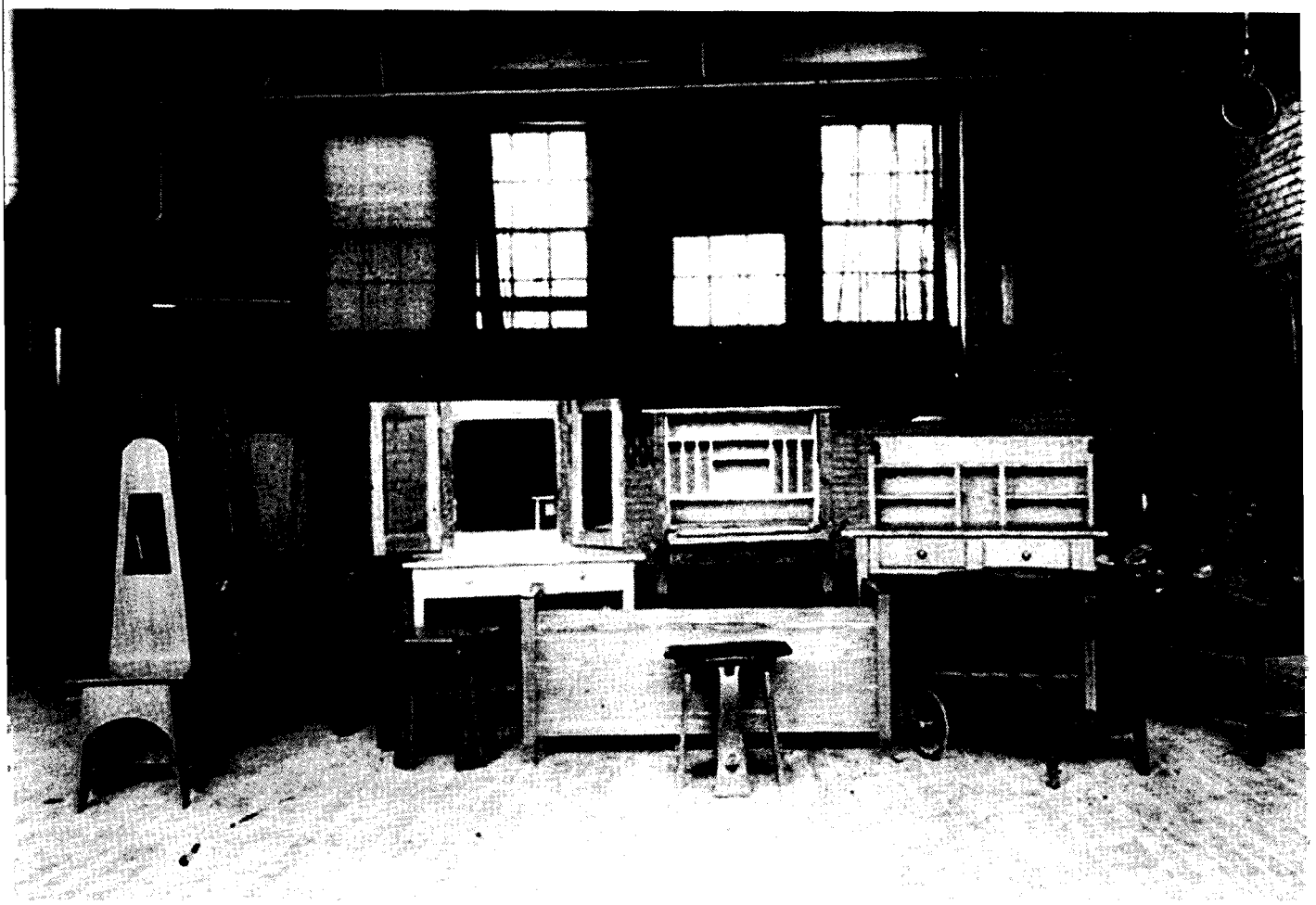

. . . not because of money or equipment, as in this Brownsville high school, but thanks to state tests . . .

Some of the arguments critics use to trash the TAAS are remarkably weak. Peter Schrag in the left-leaning *American Prospect*, for example, complains that the passing score for the TAAS exit exam is set too low. Similarly, reporter Jonathan Mintz in the *Washington Post* quotes a teacher who claims that "the TAAS math test taken for graduation could be passed by many fifth-graders." Maybe passing the test *is* too easy, but this still doesn't explain why students' scores have improved so much since 1994. Both Schrag and Mintz also refer to education researcher Sandra Stotsky's findings that the TAAS reading test has become easier over time. But Stotsky's research doesn't account for the remarkable spike up in pass rates for math—from 58 percent in 1994 to 80 percent in 1998.

A far more serious criticism of the TAAS—the one that made me most skeptical about relying on it—is that widespread cheating distorts its outcomes. When a government bureaucracy develops and administers a test to hold itself accountable, strong incentives invariably arise for the bureaucrats involved to manipulate test results to make themselves look good. No bureaucracy, I've long suspected, would squeeze a vise on itself

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willingly. Disturbing evidence surfaced that cheating was indeed occurring. In an unprecedented step, a Texas grand jury indicted the entire Austin school district for intentionally altering test scores to boost student pass rates. In Dallas, journalists reported that some teachers asked lower-performing students not to come to school on test day. The problem with such anecdotes, though, is that it's hard to know whether they're typical of widespread behavior.

That's why it's crucial to see if other evidence supports or challenges what the TAAS results seem to be showing. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a good place to look. It's a highly respected, independent measure of educational achievement. Most important, there are no penalties to schools and staff in Texas if students do poorly on the NAEP, so there's no incentive for teachers to falsify results.

"Texas's black and Hispanic students ranked first and second among U.S. minority students on the NAEP writing section."

The NAEP shows that the improvement in Texas schools was sizable and occurred across the board demographically. The average math score of Texas 13-year-olds went from 258 in 1990 to 270 in 1996 on a 500-point scale, a 4.6 percent increase. Black 13-year-olds boosted their average score 5.2 percent, from 236 to 249. Hispanics increased their score 4.4 percent, from 245 to 256. Reading scores improved more modestly: between 1992 and 1998, fourth-graders' average score went from 213 to 217 (a 1.9 percent hike), with the performance of blacks and Hispanics staying mostly flat.

To put these scores in easy-to-grasp terms, in 1990, 46 percent of Texas eighth-graders demonstrated at least "basic" skills in math; by 1996, 59 percent did. In 1990, only 18 percent of black 13-year-olds in Texas scored at a basic or better level in math; by 1996, 31 percent did—still a poor percentage, but a lot better. Hispanics did better too: 30 percent scored at a basic or higher level in 1990; 42 percent did so in 1996.

On the NAEP reading test, the percentage of Texas students performing at a basic or higher level went from 57 percent to 63 percent between 1992 and 1998. The percentage of blacks reading at a basic or higher level dropped slightly, from 40 percent to 38 percent, but the percentage of Hispanics rose from 41 percent to 48 percent. Texas's black and Hispanic public school students ranked first and second among U.S. minority students on the 1998 NAEP writing section.

The critics who pooh-poohed the TAAS results also try to dismiss Texas students' performance on the NAEP. But here, they're just plain wrong or disingenuous. Jonathan Weisman in *The New Republic* misreports the test's outcomes. Math scores on the NAEP math portion "stalled," he claims—a false charge, as we've seen. He adds: "NAEP [reading] scores between 1992 and 1998 showed no statistical gain." The key word, however, is "statistical." The four-point reading-score gain does run into a sampling problem, reducing the confidence we have in it from the conventional 95 percent standard of statistical significance to a more modest 87 percent. But hanging one's argument on the fact that reading gains didn't meet the high threshold for statistical significance (while the math-score improvements clearly did) is like the mafia boss claiming he's innocent because no court has ever convicted him: it's technically true but not altogether persuasive.

When they aren't misreporting the NAEP results, the critics attribute success on the test to coaching—"all that drill and test practice," as Schrag sourly puts it in the *American Prospect*. But even if students are drilling and practicing, they're more likely to be doing it for the TAAS, not the independent NAEP, which carries with it no consequences, for good or for ill, for the schools. Also, while most testing experts agree that coaching can inflate scores on any given test, the improvement

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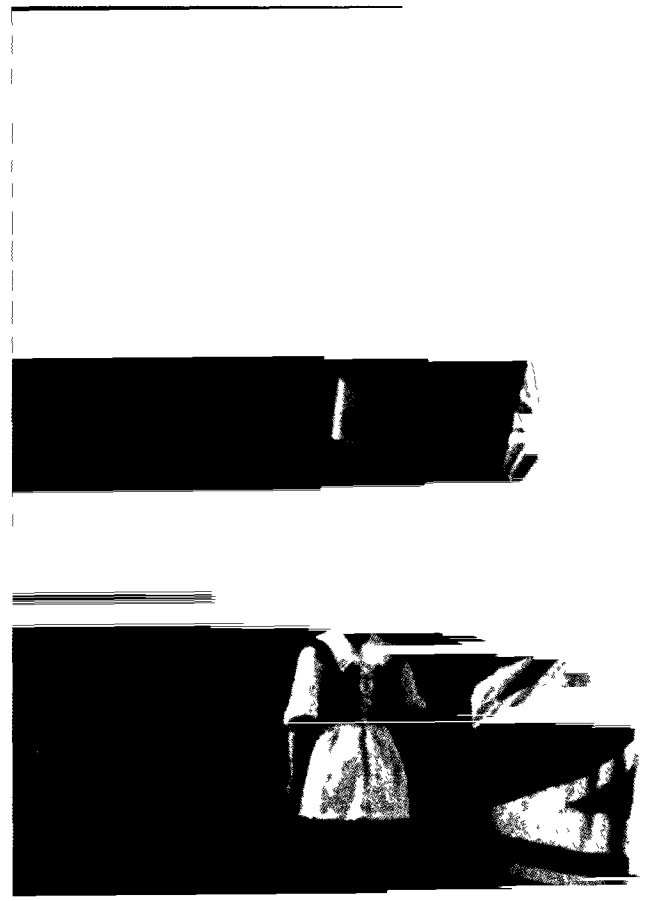
doesn't transfer easily from one kind of a test to another. While test preparation might explain some of the gains on the TAAS, it certainly doesn't explain the fat gains on the NAEP.

The *Washington Post*'s Mintz dismisses the NAEP gains by changing the standard of success The NAEP scores suggest that Texas hasn't "closed the 'achievement gap,'" he grumbles. In fact, he adds, the results suggest that "the gulf between the state's white and black" kids is widening. But the reason for this "gulf," of course, is that, while blacks, Hispanics, and whites all made significant gains, the white kids made the biggest gains of all. Rather than celebrating these across-the-board improvements, Mintz doesn't even report them. Perhaps he would have been more satisfied if white students just did worse, but I doubt that most sensible observers would exchange higher average gains for a smaller racial gap in scores.

A final attack on the Texas education turnaround charges that TAAS's higher scores have come at the expense of low-performing minority students, who have dropped out instead of taking the exit exam, driving up the average score of the remaining students. Schrag writes, "Walter Haney, an analyst at . . . Boston College, is certain that as reported TAAS scores have gone up, dropout rates have risen sharply, particularly for minority students."

I used to believe this argument. The state's official numbers, incredibly, claim that the dropout rate fell during the nineties from 6.1 percent in 1990 to 1.6 percent last year—numbers "too good to be true," as Schrag correctly observes. Recently, though, I checked to see whether the rates were rising or declining over time. To avoid relying on the ridiculous official numbers, I estimated the dropout rate by computing the ratio of eighth-grade students to high school graduates year by year. Absent a sudden spike in the number of eighth-grade students, this ratio gives us a good idea of how many kids make it from junior high to graduation.

I found that around 45 percent of students failed to complete high school in 1993; five years later, the percentage had dropped to 34 percent While that's still much too high, the important



. . . that pressure teachers to produce kids who can

point is that the dropout rate has significantly declined, while TAAS and NAEP scores have gone up Nor did I find minority students dropping out at a higher rate than in previous years In fact, while the dropout rate for Hispanics remained the same between 1993 and 1998, the rate for blacks actually fell

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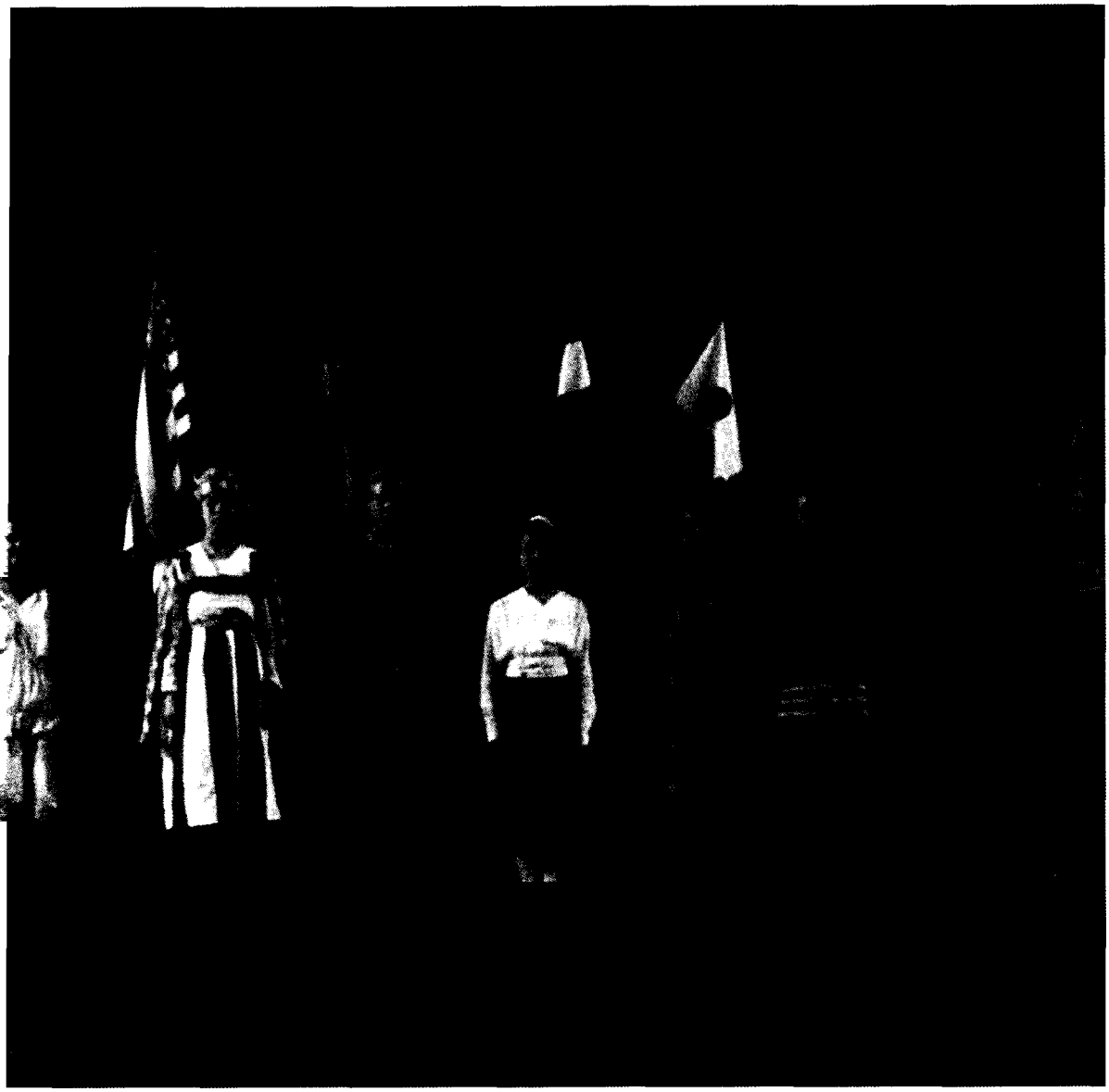

perform academically, as these Texas pupils perform dramatically in 1919.

Haney finds an increase in dropout rates because he compares the number of ninth-graders with the number of graduates—a longitudinal comparison distorted by the sharp increase in the number of ninth-graders in recent years. That's because many high schools—taking the TAAS seriously—are holding students back in ninth grade to give them an extra year of prep work before they take the TAAS tenth-grade exit exam.

The bottom line: even if you don't have confidence in the TAAS results or the officially reported dropout rates, other evidence makes it inescapably clear that Texas public school students are learning more and staying in school longer. Given the lack

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of significant national educational gains since at least the seventies, the Texas education record is impressive.

What accounts for Texas's success? Most of the reforms that teachers' unions and their fellow travelers propose are unlikely explanations. Take reducing class size, a perennial teachers' union bromide. The average number of students per teacher declined only slightly in Texas between 1993 and 1998, from 15.9 to 15.2. Per-pupil spending, adjusted for inflation, increased from $5,420 in 1993 to $5,655 in 1998, not enough to account for any difference in test scores. The percentage of teachers with advanced degrees actually fell (from 29 percent in 1993 to 25 percent in 1998), while the percentage of teachers with less than six years' experience slightly increased. Nor did the demographic characteristics of Texas students change significantly during these years.

"If you can pressure even existing public school teachers to teach, big improvements are possible."

The most obvious explanation is the TAAS itself. In many public school classrooms, especially in inner cities, remember, little teaching ever takes place. Teachers and students enter into an implicit bargain: teachers agree not to make students work, and students agree not to harass the teachers. Teachers who reject this bad deal and force students to learn have told me troubling stories about finding their car tires slashed or being threatened by disgruntled students.

Teachers, too, often embrace foolish progressive-ed nostrums that help them justify—to themselves and to others—the pitifully few hours they spend really teaching in front of a classroom. Some teachers believe that students learn better if they form groups and teach one another rather than listen to the teacher impart knowledge. Other teachers shun competition or testing for fear of damaging student self-confidence. Still others refuse to make students memorize their math tables or grammatical rules, dismissing such old-fashioned techniques as soul-destroying "drill and kill."

The main benefit of the TAAS, I believe, is that, by holding teachers accountable for imparting to their students basic skills in reading, writing, and math, it forces them to get up in front of a classroom and teach, the old-fashioned way. Supporting this view, a recent study from the liberal New York–based Edna McConnell Clark Foundation found that "unacceptable results" on the TAAS drove the Corpus Christi School District to firm up standards for students—requiring eighth-graders to complete Algebra 1, for example. True, an accountability test like the TAAS might be too easy or badly designed, or it might crowd out other legitimate school activities or crudely impose a one-size-fits-all approach on students, poorly serving kids who learn in different ways. You can come up with a host of good reasons to dislike such a test. But if it pushes public school teachers to make sure that students know how to read, write, and do arithmetic, it's worth stomaching the potential drawbacks.

Note that the TAAS only succeeded in Texas because the teachers' unions were flaccid and senior government officials—George W. Bush above all—kept the heat on. If the unions had been stronger, they might have been able to co-opt or thwart the test. And if senior government officials had been weaker in their determination to hold schools and teachers accountable, the disorganized resistance that educators in Texas did offer would have been enough to derail the test.

All this is interesting beyond the politics of the current presidential campaign. What Texas's example shows us is that, if you can pressure even existing public school teachers to teach, big improvements are possible. Holding teachers and schools accountable for the performance of their students is the best way to apply such pressure. Texas's educational miracle underscores the urgency of enforcing accountability on the public schools, something the teachers' unions are resisting tooth and nail in most states—a true conspiracy against the nation's children. ■

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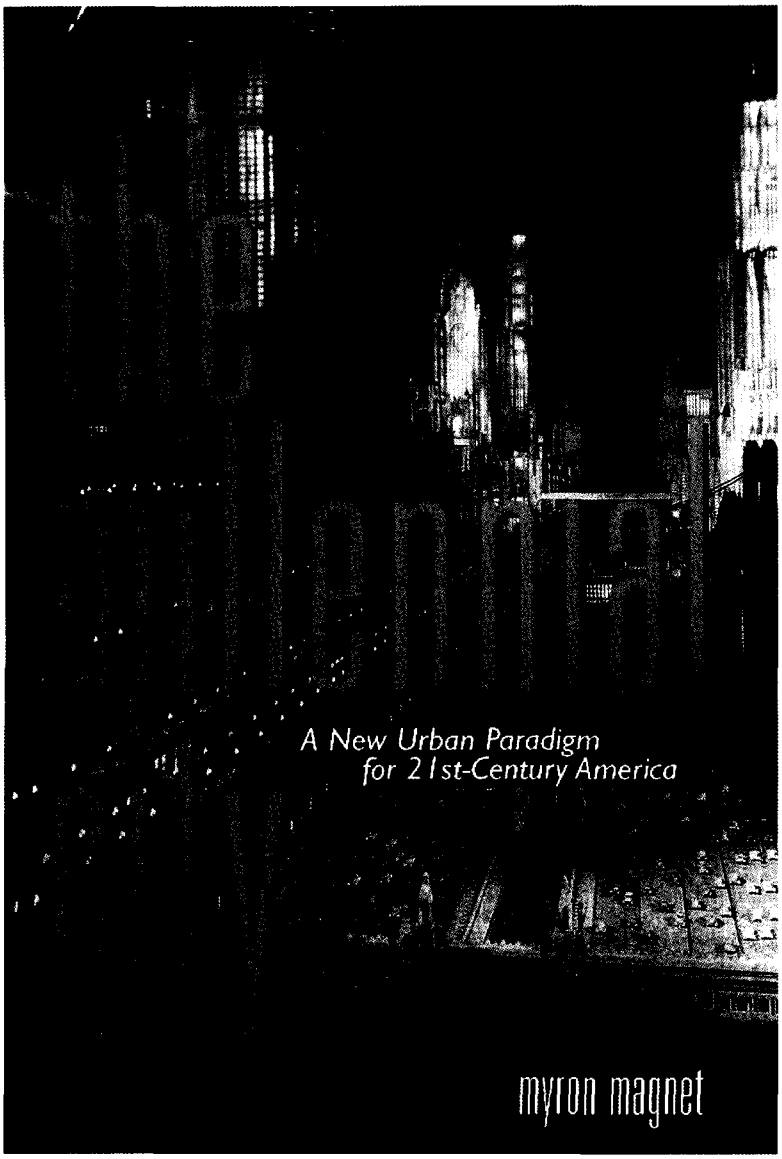

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A portfolio of classical music-making in Gotham

New York's musical events have ranged from the grand, like this performance at the old Metropolitan Opera House (at left), to the intimate, like the turn-of-the-last-century concert of early music, above. And great composers have made the city their home, too, including Béla Bartók (shown at far right at the New School), who composed his Concerto for Orchestra and Third Piano Concerto during his residence in New York from 1940 until his death in 1945.

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A worker at Steinway & Sons, which opened in New York in 1853, checks drying piano rims in the company's Astoria, Queens, factory.

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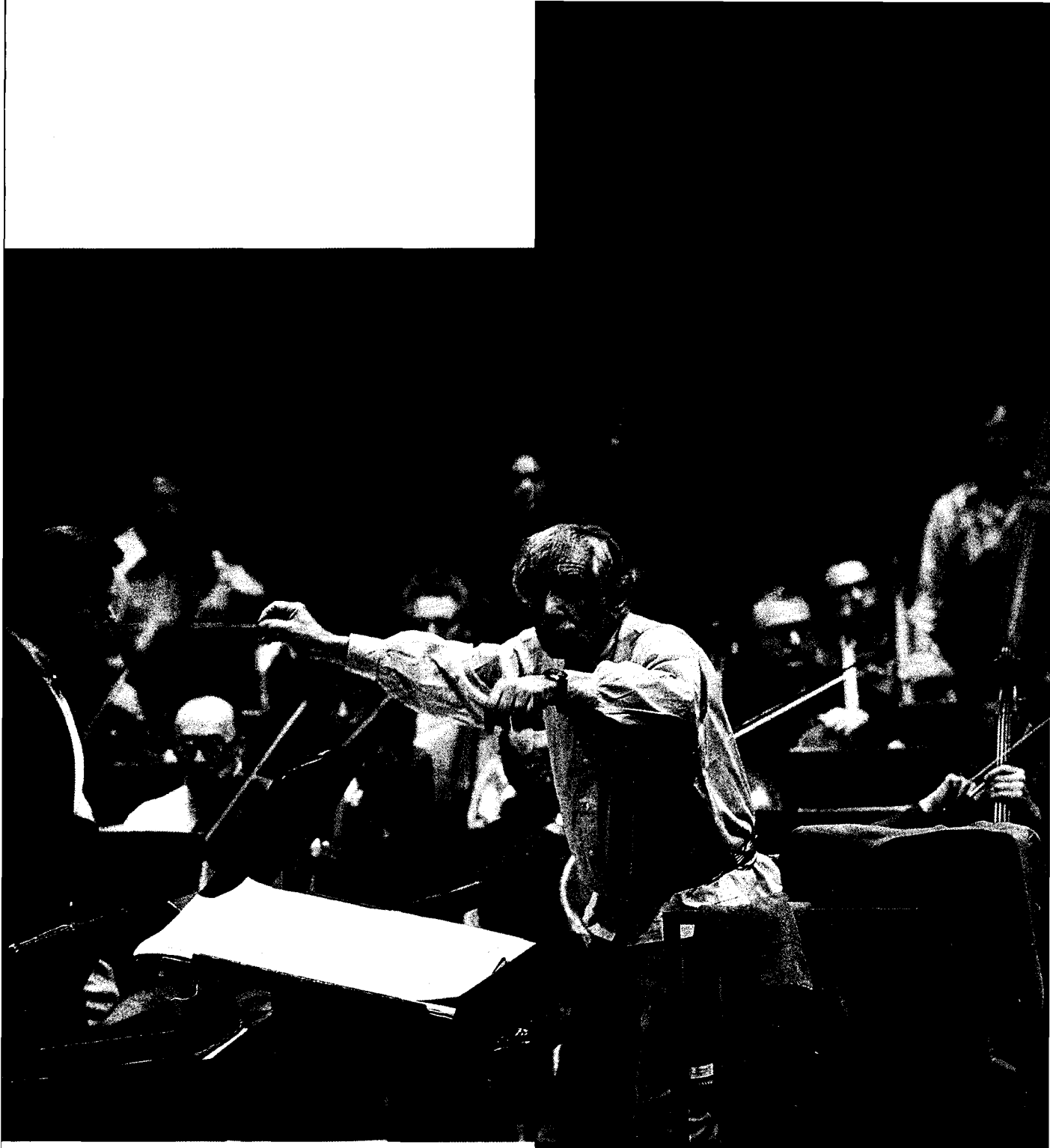

Arturo Toscanini (left) became conductor of the Metropolitan Opera in 1908, of the New York Philharmonic in 1926, and of the NBC Symphony in 1937. Leonard Bernstein (above), appointed assistant conductor of the Philharmonic in 1943, was its music director from 1959 to 1969.

BETTMANN/CORBIS (2)

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Choristers at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine put their hearts into it.

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Urbanities

All Sex, All the Time

Theodore Dalrymple

If there is one thing of which modern man is utterly convinced, it is that he has reached a state of sexual enlightenment. Gone forever are the days of unhealthy concealment, of absurd Victorian taboos that led to the application of cruel and cumbersome devices to children to prevent masturbation, to prudish circumlocutions about sexual matters, to the covering of piano legs to preserve the purity of the thoughts of men in the drawing room. We are at ease with our sexuality, and the poet Philip Larkin's famous ironic lines

Sexual intercourse began
In nineteen sixty-three . . .

express for us an important truth: that for the first time in history we can now enjoy sexual relations without any of the unnecessary social and psychological accretions of the past that so complicated and diminished life. No more guilt, shame, jealousy, anxiety, frustration, hypocrisy, and confusion. Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last!

Yet, enlightened as we believe ourselves to be, a golden age of contentment has not dawned—very far from it. Relations between the sexes are as fraught as ever they were. The sexual revolution has not yielded peace of mind but confusion, contradiction, and conflict. There is certainty about nothing except the rightness, inevitability, and irrevocability of the path we have gone down.

A hundred yards from where I write this, 12-year-old prostitutes often stand under street lamps on the corner at night, waiting for customers. The chief of the local police has said that he will not remove them, because he considers that they are sufficiently victimized already, and he is not prepared to victimize them further (his job, apparently, being to empathize rather than to enforce the law). The local health authorities send a van round several times at night to distribute condoms to the girls, the main official concern being to ensure that the sex in which the girls take part is safe, from the bacteriological and virological point of view. It is the authorities' proud boast that 100 percent of local prostitutes now routinely use condoms, at a cost to the city's taxpayers of $135,000 a year, soon to be increased by the employment of a further outreach worker, whose main qualification, according to the recent job advertisement in the local press, will be "an ability to work non-judgmentally"—that is, to have no moral qualms about aiding and abetting child prostitution. Meanwhile, local residents (such as my neighbors, a banker, a lawyer, an antiquarian bookseller, and two university professors) who object to the presence of discarded condoms in their gardens and in the street outside their homes have been offered a special instrument with which to pick them up, in lieu of any attempt to prevent them from arriving there in the first place. And at the same time, the overwhelming majority of the work done by the social workers of the city concerns the sexual abuse of children, principally by stepfathers and mothers' boyfriends who move in after biological fathers move out.

Evidence of sexual chaos is everywhere. Not a day passes without several of my patients providing ample testimony of it. For example, yesterday I saw a woman who had tried to kill herself after her daughter, nearly 16 years old, moved out of her home with her eight-month-old child to live with her new 22-year-old boyfriend. It goes without saying that this boyfriend was not the father of her baby but a man she had met recently in a nightclub. The father of the baby was "off the scene," as the end of a liaison is invariably described: fathers round here having their exits and their entrances, their exits usually following their entrances with indecent haste.

The mother was 14 when the father, age 21, made his entrance. On discovering that she was pregnant, he did what many young men do nowadays in such a situation: he beat her up. This not only relieves the feelings but occasionally produces a miscarriage. In this case, however, it failed to do so; instead, the father was caught *in flagrante delicto* (that is to say, while beating her) by my patient, who promptly attacked him, managing to injure him so severely that he had to go to the hospital. While there, he and she did a little informal plea-bargaining: she would not inform on him for having had sex with

Margaret Mead (center) in her Samoan sexual paradise—as she imagined

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an underage girl, if he did not press charges against her for having assaulted him.

My patient subsequently spent what little money she had upon her grandchild's clothes, stroller, crib, bedding, and so on, even going $1,500 into debt to fund its comfort. Then her daughter decided to move out, and my patient was mortified.

Mortified, that is, by the absence of her grandchild, for whom she thought she had sacrificed so much. This was the first objection she had made in the whole affair. She had not considered the sexual conduct of her daughter, or that of either of the two men, to be in any way reprehensible. If the father of her grandchild had not turned violent, it would never have crossed her mind that he had done anything wrong in having sex with her daughter; and indeed, having done nothing to discourage the liaison, she in effect encouraged him. And her daughter had behaved only as she would have expected any girl of her age to behave.

It might be argued, of course, that such obviously wrongful behavior has occurred always: for when it comes to sexual misdemeanor there is nothing new under the sun, and history shows plentiful examples of almost any perversion or dishonorable conduct. But this is the first time in history there has been mass denial that sexual relations are a proper subject of moral reflection or need to be governed by moral restrictions. The result of this denial, not surprisingly, has been soaring divorce rates and mass illegitimacy, among other phenomena. The sexual revolution has been above all a change in moral sensibility, in the direction of a thorough coarsening of feeling, thought, and behavior.

Watching a British comedy from the mid-1950s recently, I grasped the speed and completeness of that change. In the film was a scene in which the outraged working-class father of a pregnant teenage daughter demanded that the middle-class boy who had made love to her must now marry her. The present-day audience giggled helplessly at this absurdly old-fashioned demand, which only 45 years previously would still have seemed perfectly normal, indeed unarguable. Such naïveté is not for us in our superior, enlightened state, however, and we prove our sophistication by finding it ridiculous.

But who, one might ask, had the deeper and subtler moral understanding of human relations: the audience of the mid-1950s or that of today? To the 1950s audience it would have been unnecessary to point out that, once a child had been conceived, the father owed a duty not only to the child, but to the mother; that his own wishes in the matter were not paramount, let alone all-important, and that he was not simply an individual but a member of a society whose expectations he had to meet if he were to retain its respect; and that a sense of moral obligation toward a woman was not inimical to a satisfying relationship with her but a precondition of it. To the present-day audience, by contrast, the only considerations in such a situation would be the individual inclinations of the parties involved, floating free of all moral or social constraints. In the modern view, unbridled personal freedom is the only good to be pursued; any obstacle to it is a problem to be overcome.

And yet at the same time—in the same audience—there are many young people yearning for precisely the certainties that they feel obliged to mock: young women who hope to find a man who will woo her, love her, respect her, stand by her, and be a father to her children, while there are many men with the reciprocal wish. How many times have I heard from my patients of their aching desire to settle down and live in a normal family, and yet who have no idea whatever how to achieve this goal that was once within the reach of almost everyone!

Our newspapers confirm daily the breakdown of the last vestiges of the traditional mores governing sexual relations. Last weekend, for instance, the British papers reported the third baby born to a homosexual couple by surrogate motherhood, and a liberal paper reported (with implicit approval and admiration, of course) a growing trend among women to make themselves pregnant by artificial insemination, like cattle. Of course, human sexual activity has never been very closely confined to procreation, even before the advent of birth control; but surely this is the first time that procreation has been dissociated from human sexual activity.

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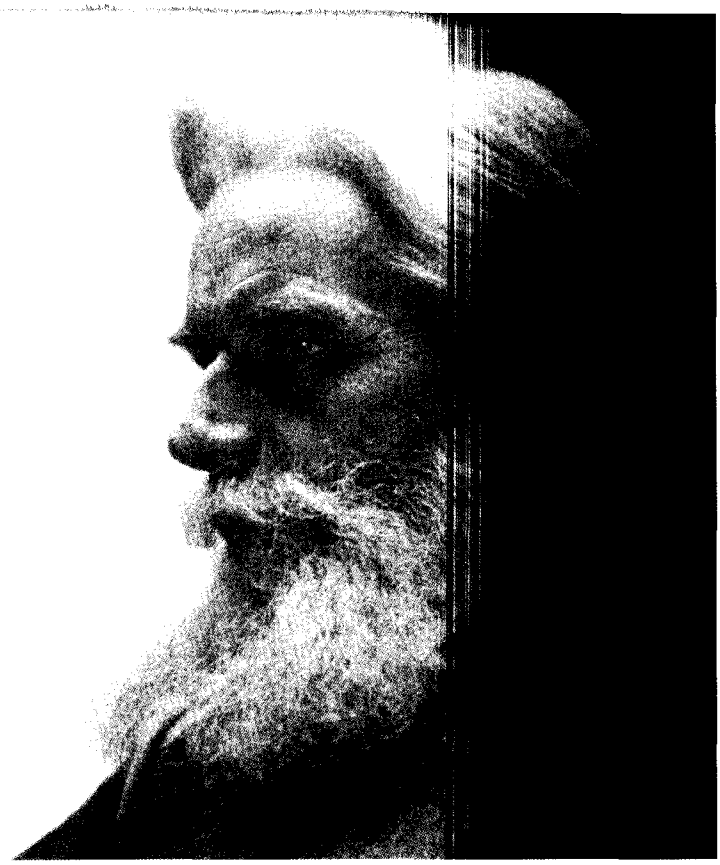

E.O. HOPPÉ/CORBIS

For Havelock Ellis, sexual perversions were a triumph of idealism.

Thanks to the sexual revolution, current confusions are manifold. In a society that forms sexual liaisons with scarcely a thought, a passing suggestive remark can result in a lawsuit; the use of explicit sexual language is *de rigueur* in literary circles, but medical journals fear to print the word "prostitute" and use the delicate euphemism "sex worker" instead; commentators use the word "transgressive," especially in connection with sex, as a term of automatic approbation when describing works of art, while such sex offenders as reach prison have to be protected from the murderous assaults of their fellow prisoners; anxiety about the sexual abuse of children subsists with an utter indifference to the age of consent; compulsory sex education and free contraception have proved not incompatible with the termination of a third of all pregnancies in Britain and with unprecedented numbers of teenage pregnancies; the effective elimination of the legal distinction between marriage and cohabitation is contemporary with the demand that homosexual couples be permitted to marry and enjoy the traditional legal rights of marriage; and while it has become ever more difficult for married but childless parents to adopt, homosexual couples now have the right to do so. The right of lesbians to artificially aided conception by the sperm of homosexual men has likewise been conceded on the principle of non-discrimination, and 60-year-old women naturally enough claim the same rights to in vitro fertilization. Sexual liberty has led to an increase, not to a diminution, in violence between the sexes, both by men and by women: for people rarely grant the object of their affection the freedom that they claim and practice for themselves, with a consequent rise in mistrust and jealousy—one of the great, age-old provokers of violence, as *Othello* attests. Our era admires sexual athleticism but condemns predatory conduct. Boundaries between the sexes have melted away, as men become women by surgical means, and women men, while demands for tolerance and understanding grow ever more shrill and imperious. The only permissible judgment in polite society is that no judgment is permissible.

A century-long reaction against Victorian prudery, repression, and hypocrisy, led by intellectuals who mistook their personal problems for those of society as a whole, has created this confusion. It is as though these intellectuals were constantly on the run from their stern, unbending, and joyless forefathers—and as if they took as an unfailing guide to wise conduct either the opposite of what their forefathers said and did, or what would have caused them most offense, had they been able even to conceive of the possibility of such conduct.

Revolutions are seldom the spontaneous mass upheaval of the downtrodden, provoked beyond endurance by their miserable condition, and the sexual revolution was certainly no exception in this respect. The revolution had its intellectual progenitors, as shallow, personally twisted, and dishonest a parade of people as one could ever wish to encounter. They were all utopians, lacking understanding of the realities of human nature; they all thought that sexual relations could be brought to the pitch of

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Alex Comfort, author of *The Joy of Sex*, had trouble explaining the facts of life to his son.

perfection either by divesting them of moral significance altogether or by reversing the moral judgment that traditionally attached to them; all believed that human unhappiness was solely the product of laws, customs, and taboos. They were not the kind of people to take seriously Edmund Burke's lapidary warning that "it is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free": on the contrary, just as appetites often grow with the feeding, so the demands of the revolutionaries escalated whenever the last demand was met. When the expected happiness failed to emerge, the analysis of the problem and the proposed solution were always the same: more license, less self-control. By 1994, John Money, perhaps the most influential academic sexologist of the last third of the twentieth century, was still able to write in all seriousness that we live in an anti-sexual and taboo-ridden society. Get rid of the remaining taboos, he implied, and human unhappiness will take care of itself.

Not that there are many taboos left to destroy. In my hospital, for example, adolescent and young adult visitors to their hospitalized boyfriends or girlfriends not infrequently climb into bed and indulge in sexual foreplay with them, in full view of the staff and of old people occupying the beds opposite. This gross disinhibition would once have been taken as a sign of madness but is now accepted as perfectly normal: indeed, objection to such behavior would now appear objectionable and ridiculous. No one seems to have noticed, however, that a loss of a sense of shame means a loss of privacy; a loss of privacy means a loss of intimacy; and a loss of intimacy means a loss of depth. There is, in fact, no better way to produce shallow and superficial people than to let them live their lives entirely in the open, without concealment of anything.

There is virtually no aspect of modern society's disastrous sexual predicament that does not find its apologist and perhaps its "onlie" begetter in the work of the sexual revolutionaries 50 or 100 years earlier. It is impossible to overlook the connection between what they said should happen and what has actually happened. Ideas have their consequences, if only many years later.

Take the question of adolescent sexuality. It has long been an orthodoxy among the right-thinking that it is perfectly natural and therefore to be welcomed. Any attempt to promote self-control would be killjoy and would drive such sexuality underground once again, resulting in a renewal of furtiveness and yet more teenage pregnancy. That is why British doctors must now connive at illegal sexual acts by distributing contraceptives to underage children without informing their parents.

The patron saint of these ideas is Margaret Mead. In 1928, when she was 27, she published her *Coming of Age in Samoa*, which

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made her famous for the rest of her life. When she died 50 years later, her book was still selling 100,000 copies a year. Few university students during that half-century did not read it or at least know its message.

Mead was a pupil of the anthropologist Franz Boas, an extreme cultural determinist who wanted to prove that the angst of adolescence was, like most important human realities, the product of culture, not of biology, as was then generally believed. If a society could be found somewhere in the world in which adolescents felt no angst, QED: hormones were not the cause. Mead, intellectually infatuated with Boas and dependent upon him for her academic advancement, was preordained to find in Samoa what he wanted her to find.

And find it she did—or thought she did. Here was a South Sea paradise in which adolescents spent the years between puberty and marriage in uninhibited sexual activity, as much as possible with as many as possible. There was no jealousy, no rivalry, no anxiety, no guilt, just fun—and, *mirabile dictu*, no unwanted pregnancy, a somewhat surprising fact that did not arrest Mead's attention then or at any time subsequently. So Mead added a value judgment to Boas's proposition: here was a culture that dealt with sex better than we, as the absence of Samoan adolescent unhappiness proved.

Of course her depiction of Samoa was in error: she was taken in by her ironical informants. Sexual morality in Samoa was puritanical rather than liberal, and owed much to the efforts of the London Missionary Society, no advocate of free love during adolescence or at any other time.

But few people are averse to the message that one can indulge appetites freely without bad consequences to oneself or others, and so Mead's book passed as authoritative. And if youthful sexual libertinism was possible in Samoa with only beneficial social and psychological effects, why not in Sheffield and Schenectady? Even had her depiction of Samoa, *per impossibile*, been accurate, no one paused to wonder whether Samoa was a plausible model for Europe or America or whether the mere existence of a sexual custom—the celibacy of religious communities down the ages, say—should warrant its universal adoption.

So generations of educated people accepted Mead's ideas about adolescent sexuality as substantially correct and reasonable. They took the Samoan way of ordering these matters as natural, enjoyable, healthy, and psychologically beneficial. No doubt Mead's ideas were somewhat distorted as they filtered down into the class of people who had not read her (or any other) book: but it does not altogether surprise me now to meet people who started living in sexual union with a boyfriend or girlfriend from the age of 11 or 12, under the complaisant eyes of their parents. Only someone completely lacking in knowledge of the human heart—someone, in fact, a little like Margaret Mead—would have failed to predict the consequences: gross precocity followed by permanent adolescence and a premature world-weariness.

For example, an intelligent young woman patient of 20 came to me last week complaining of the dreariness of life. She had given up on education at the age of 13 to pursue sexual encounters full-time, as it were, but the initial excitement had worn off, leaving only grayness and a vague self-disgust behind. At the time of her induction into the sexual life, of course, she had been led to believe that it was the key to happiness and fulfillment, that nothing else counted: but as with all monochromatic descriptions of the ends of life, this had proved bitterly disappointing.

And, of course, once boundaries, such as the age of consent, that are to some extent arbitrary but nonetheless socially necessary are breached, they tend to erode entirely. Thus children inhabit a highly sexualized world earlier and earlier, and social pressure upon them to exhibit sexualized behavior starts earlier and earlier. A schoolteacher friend recently told me how she had comforted a seven-year-old who was in tears because a girl in his class had insulted him, calling him a virgin. She asked whether he knew what the word meant.

"No," replied the little boy. "But I know it's something horrible."

The sexual revolutionaries' ideas about the relations between men and women—entailing ever greater sexual liberty, ever less mastery of the appetite—were so absurd and utopian that it is hard

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to understand how anyone could have taken them seriously. But mere absurdity has never prevented the triumph of bad ideas, if they accord with easily aroused fantasies of an existence freed of human limitations.

One of the earliest of the sexual revolutionaries, the English doctor and litterateur, Havelock Ellis, had strong opinions about marriage and relations between the sexes in general. For many years, this supremely strange and repulsive, though learned, man—who looked like a tripartite cross between Tolstoy, Rasputin, and Bernard Shaw; who was one of the many semi-pagan ideological nudists that England produced at the end of the nineteenth century; and who never achieved full sexual arousal until his second wife urinated on him in his late middle age—won respect on both sides of the Atlantic as a sexual sage. His works enjoyed immense prestige and wide circulation during the first third of the twentieth century. He attached supreme, almost mystical, importance to the sexual act (perhaps not surprisingly, given his great difficulties with it); his conception of ideal relations between men and women was completely untouched by any awareness of human reality and was at the same time implicitly sordid. Many venerated his views and made them the basis of an entire philosophy of life, as did D. H. Lawrence, another English sexual pagan.

Ellis believed in a complete fusion of two souls that, in the course of the sexual act, would achieve union with the creator of the universe (whom, being a modern pagan, he refrained from calling God). But for this mystical fusion to take place, the relations between men and women first had to be freed of all the dross of petty considerations, such as law, custom, and what was then considered morality. "Our thoughts of duty and goodness and chastity are the things that need to be altered and put aside; these are the barriers to true goodness," Ellis wrote. "I foresee the positive denial of *all* positive morals, the removal of *all* restrictions. I feel I do not know what 'license,' as we should term it, may not belong to the perfect state of Man." Once freed from all restraint—social, moral, legal, and political—man would regain his natural beauty and generosity of character. He would become again the noble sexual savage. It never occurred to Ellis and his ilk that he might become instead the prototypical caveman of the cartoonists, dragging off his mate of the moment by the hair.

Ellis was not alone in this adolescent utopian dream of unlimited sex without tears as the key to both human happiness and goodness. Another English doctor who achieved world fame as a sexologist more than half a century later, Alex Comfort, whose sex manuals sold by the tens of millions, was of much the same opinion. Although he apparently had great difficulty in explaining the facts of life to his own son, he advised all 15-year-old boys—again, with the notable exception of his own son—to take condoms with them to parties, and he explained to adolescents in his manual *The Facts of Love* that pornography was "a long word for any kind of book or movie about sex which someone wants to prohibit." An anarchist and pacifist who saw all institutions merely as emanations of power, which he believed to be the supreme enemy of human happiness, he had opposed armed resistance to Nazism during World War II. In *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom* (which two phenomena he regarded as diametrically opposed) he wrote: "Normality of the biological kind . . . excludes religious coercion, economic pressure and social custom. Institutions based upon the State and other such bodies, civil or religious, have no place in biological sexuality." In other words, sex should float free from all considerations except the sexual attraction of the moment.

What is left but personal whim in the determination of sexual conduct? It is precisely the envelopment of sex (and all other natural functions) with an aura of deeper meaning that makes man human and distinguishes him from the rest of animate nature. To remove that meaning, to reduce sex to biology, as all the sexual revolutionaries did in practice, is to return man to a level of primitive behavior of which we have no record in human history. All animals have sex, but only man makes love. When sex is deprived of the meaning with which only the social conventions, religious taboos, and personal restraints so despised by sexual revolutionaries such as Ellis and Comfort can infuse it, all that is left is the ceaseless—and ultimately boring and meaningless—search for the transcendent orgasm. Having been issued the

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false prospectus of happiness through unlimited sex, modern man concludes, when he is not happy with his life, that his sex has not been unlimited enough. If welfare does not eliminate squalor, we need more welfare; if sex does not bring happiness, we need more sex.

It is a matter of curiosity that such puerile drivel could ever have been mistaken for serious thought; but the fact is that Ellis's and Comfort's view of the proper basis for the relationship between men and women is now the commonly accepted, even orthodox, one. Explaining their decision to part from the mother or father of their children, my patients routinely tell me that they do not experience with her or him the bliss they clearly expected to experience, and that their union had no cosmic significance *à la* Ellis. The possibility that their union might serve other, slightly more mundane and other-regarding purposes has never occurred to them. That depth of feeling is at least as important as intensity (and in the long run, more important) is a thought completely alien to them. With no social pressure to keep them together, with religious beliefs utterly absent from their lives, and with the state through its laws and welfare provisions positively encouraging the fragmentation of the family, relationships become kaleidoscopic in their changeability but oddly uniform in their denouement.

I have seen Comfort's utopia, and it does not work.

One has only to compare the writings of the sexual revolutionaries with a single sonnet by

BETTMANN/CORBIS

Alfred Kinsey, expert on wasps and sex

Shakespeare (to take only one of literature's myriad subtle reflections on love) to see what a terrible retrocession in understanding and refinement those writings represent:

When my love swears that she
is made of truth
I do believe her though I
know she lies,
That she might think me some
untutored youth
Unlearned in the world's false
subtleties . . . .
O, love's best habit is in
seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to
have years told.
Therefore I lie with her,
and she with me,
And in our faults by lies
we flattered be.

The subtlety of this understanding of the human heart, to say nothing of the beauty with which it is expressed, has never been excelled. Everything is there: the human need for deep companionship throughout life, the inevitability of compromise if such companionship is to last, and the acceptance of the inherent limitations of existence that is essential to happiness. Shakespeare's view answers the needs of man as a physical, social, and spiritual being—and no one with the slightest acquaintance with his work could accuse him of being anti-sexual.

Another rhetorical technique the sexual revolutionaries favor (apart from the appeal to a fantasy of limitless eroticism) has been to try to dissolve sexual boundaries. They preached that all sexual behavior is, by nature, a continuum. And they thought that if they could show that sex had no natural boundaries, all legal prohibition or social restraint of it would at once be seen as arbitrary and artificial and therefore morally untenable: for only differences in nature could be legitimately recognized by legal and social taboos.

The arch-proponent of this viewpoint was Alfred Kinsey, author of the famous reports, a man who spent the first half of his professional life studying and classifying gall wasps and the second half studying and classifying orgasms: though in the event, he was to find the taxonomy of gall wasps far more complex than that of orgasms, since he came to the conclusion that all orgasms were created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, etc.

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Kinsey's program had two pillars, designed to free people of the sexual restraint that he considered the cause of all their miseries. The first was to establish by means of extensive survey that the sexual behavior of Americans was very different from what it was supposed to have been according to traditional morality. Without doubt, he skewed his survey to ensure this intensely desired result. He had a personal ax to grind, of course: he was himself a man of perverted sexual appetite, though like most sexual revolutionaries he was a very late developer. He pierced his own foreskin and put metal wires up his urethra, and his filming of 2,000 men masturbating to ejaculation (ostensibly to discover how far they could project their semen) must rank as one of history's most prodigious feats of voyeurism.

Having established to his own very great satisfaction that 37 percent of American males had had a homosexual experience leading to orgasm, having expended three times as much space in his report on homosexuality as on heterosexuality, and having intimated that all forms of sexuality lie on a spectrum rather than existing as separate, discrete activities, Kinsey then established the second pillar of his sexual philosophy: what might be termed the 40 Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong argument. Our sexual morality, he said, must be based not upon a striving toward goodness, toward an ideal, but upon what actually happens here and now. Otherwise we are merely chasing chimeras. The fact that such a morality extends the scope of what actually happens by providing an instant justification for whatever anybody does whenever he does it appears not to have struck Kinsey; but if it had, it wouldn't have worried him.

Applied in the sphere of financial honesty, Kinsey's argument would have been seen as preposterous at once. A survey of the kind he conducted into financial probity would surely have revealed that there is hardly a person in the world who has never in his life been dishonest—who has never taken so much as a paper clip or overestimated expenses on a tax return. No sensible person would conclude from this that the striving for honesty is a sham, that it is pointless to have any laws regarding financial conduct, that it is perfectly all right for shopkeepers to shortchange their customers and for their customers to steal from them. And yet this is precisely what the sexual revolutionaries, Kinsey foremost among them, have argued in the realm of sex.

The work of dissolving the boundaries continues, never satisfied that it has gone quite far enough—as if to accept one limitation or taboo would be to admit the legitimacy of all. I recently read in a criminological journal that the only conclusive argument against bestiality with chickens was that the chickens were non-consenting to the liaison, and that therefore their (human? avian?) rights were infringed. And while Kinsey wanted to make all sexual activity equal, psychologist and sex therapist John Money went even further, insisting upon the almost infinite plasticity of what he termed "gender identity." He wrote that: "Beyond the four basic reproductive functions [impregnation, menstruation, gestation, and lactation], nothing—nothing—of the differences between the sexes is immutably ordained along sex lines. . . . As long as the four basic reproductive functions are allowed for, . . . no particular gender stereotype is unalterable. A society has almost unlimited choice of role design or redesign." Thus there is no normal and no abnormal either: whatever we choose is good, or at least not bad.

Money became, needless to say, a hero of radical feminists who wished to claim that female "sex roles" had been imposed upon them arbitrarily by society. A self-proclaimed "missionary of sex," who advocated all sex, all the time, he left to each individual the free choice of creating his sexual identity. No perversion was alien to him, pedophilia included, which only those in a state of "moralistic ignorance," he asserted, would condemn. Money became the multiculturalist of sex: with polymorphous perversity replacing cultural diversity as a good in itself.

Money was not only a theoretician, but a practitioner, head of the Johns Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic. It was his belief in the unlimited malleability of human sexuality that led him, in his most famous case, to advise the parents of a baby whose penis was nearly cut off during a botched circumcision that he should henceforth be brought up

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as a girl. After all, what was a girl but a boy in skirts? And what was a boy but a girl given toy guns to play with? The requisite operations once performed on the unfortunate child, to complete what the botched circumcision had nearly accomplished, all would be well.

The boy brought up as a girl continued to show the boy-like qualities familiar to any mother. He or she fought like a trooper, was more interested in cars and trains than in dolls, was adventurous and boisterous, and, given a jump rope as a gift, used it only to tie up his or her twin brother. As he or she grew older, he or she expressed no sexual interest whatever in boys. Professor Money continued to describe the case as an unqualified success, and for a long time the scientific and journalistic worlds were fooled. Yes, it was possible to turn little boys into little girls by fiat. No, sexual identity was not fixed by biology but was socially constructed, a product of convention and custom. Money's view was accepted uncritically as true and therefore it became orthodox (I remember being taught it as a medical student).

When at age 14 the subject of Money's experiment was told of what had happened to him or her in early life, he or she immediately determined to revert to masculinity, for he or she, depressed and maladjusted all through childhood, had known all along in inchoate fashion that something was wrong: and, with yet more reconstructive surgery, he made a sound readjustment to masculinity and is now happily married to a woman. This was a part of the story that Money never told, for it contradicted the philosophy to which he had devoted his entire life's work. It suggested that we cannot construct a sexual utopia of the kind that he, a once repressed farm boy from New Zealand, had dreamed about.

Such theories could only license and encourage ever more bizarre conduct and appetites of course. And the escalation of appetite that Jeffrey Dahmer experienced, eventually finding sexual release only in congress with the intestines of his increasing numbers of murdered victims, can occur on a mass scale also, as witness a recent film, funded by the Canadian Arts Council, "normalizing" necrophilia.

And so now, when I meet lesbian patients who have used a syringe full of a male friend's semen to impregnate themselves, they challenge me to dare to pass judgment on them. For who am I to judge what is natural or unnatural, normal or abnormal, good or bad? Transsexuals, in my experience, exude a triumphalist moral superiority, conscious of having forced the world to accept what it previously deemed unacceptable. Perhaps, if they haven't read John Money, they have read the eerily similar opinion of Havelock Ellis, that sexual perversions (which he called "erotic symbolisms") are what most distinguish man from the animals, and are his supreme achievement: "[O]f all the manifestations of sexual psychology, . . . they are the most specifically human. More than any others they involve the potently plastic force of the imagination. They bring us the individual man, not only apart from his fellows, but in opposition, himself creating his own paradise." They constitute the supreme triumph of idealism.

Here is the gnostic reversal of good and evil in the realm of sex, the technique that Sartre and Mailer employed in the realm of criminality, transforming Jean Genet and Jack Abbott into existential heroes. Of course, it is true that human sexuality is different from that of the beasts, but surely not because men can desire intercourse with chickens while chickens cannot reciprocate. We must go to literature, not to sexologists, if we want to understand the difference.

It isn't necessary, of course, for people to read the original sources of ideas for those ideas to become part of their mental furniture. But the ideas and sensibilities of the sexual revolutionaries have now so thoroughly permeated our society that we are scarcely aware any longer of the extent to which they have done so. The Dionysian has definitively triumphed over the Apollonian. No grace, no reticence, no measure, no dignity, no secrecy, no depth, no limitation of desire is accepted. Happiness and the good life are conceived as prolonged sensual ecstasy and nothing more. When, in my work in an English slum, I observe what the sexual revolution has wrought, I think of the words commemorating architect Sir Christopher Wren in the floor of St. Paul's Cathedral: *si monumentum requiris, circumspice.* ■

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Animal Rights

Roger Scruton

The U.S. Constitution specifies our rights but is silent about our obligations. The Founders took for granted that people knew what their duties were. After all, they were brought up on the Bible and the Ten Commandments, and it was no business of the state to remind them that they should live godly, sober, and righteous lives. The role of the state was to broker their disagreements, to make the space required for social peace, to ensure that no central power could oppress the individual citizen, and to prevent any body of citizens from ganging up against others or depriving them of their elementary freedoms.

Admirable though this conception is, it assumes a condition of society that is no longer with us. The continuing emphasis on rights, in a world that has lost sight of its duties, is as much a fragmenting as a cohesive social force. This, surely, is the real meaning of the conservative complaint that an activist judiciary undermines the "moral majority." By constantly extending and amplifying the list of rights, the Supreme Court also depletes the reservoir of duties. Striking in this respect was the decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*, which deprived the unborn fetus of all rights under the Constitution, while discovering (conservatives would say, inventing) a "right of privacy" nowhere mentioned in the Constitution but strong enough nevertheless to override the primary duty of a mother toward her unborn child. What more vivid example could there be of the use of rights to cancel duties and at the same time to privilege the desires of present generations over the long-term interests of society? And what clearer example of the liberal attempt to "discover" constitutional rights whenever the cause requires them and regardless of what the Constitution says?

This is not to say that traditionalist views on abortion are right and the views of liberals wrong. It is simply to point to the far-reaching social effect of a legal process that puts rights at the top of the agenda, and that encourages everyone, regardless of his social and moral standing, to sue for them. The long-term consequence will be to reduce majority values and life-styles to mere "options" among a range of socially valid alternatives, all of which will deserve equal respect from the law and equal subsidy from the exchequer. This is already happening with homosexual "marriage"; it will extend, in time, to many other forms of relationship, in obedience to the urgent desire of this or that section of society to free itself from "outmoded" burdens or to enjoy some previously forbidden pleasure. Euthanasia is currently a crime. It will soon be a right—a right for which relatives can sue, and which they will use with a clear conscience to put their old parents out of their misery.

Still, there are limits. Rights may have taken precedence over duties, but American jurisprudence has always been clear that rights cannot be had for free. Every legal privilege creates a burden on the one who does not possess it: your right may be my duty, and people who claim rights are also in the business of respecting them. Rights cannot be invented without also inventing the social and legal relations that enable us to uphold them, and the shopping list of rights will therefore be severely limited by social custom and human nature. The conservative hope is that, at a certain point, common sense will prevail. "If you invent any more rights," people then will say, "you will find yourself in a society where nobody respects them. In other words, you will have destroyed the very benefit that you sought to extend." And it seems to me that the birth of "communitarianism" as a posture within the American liberal tradition is really a recognition of this possibility, and of the underlying truth that a society cannot be based in rights alone but must also inculcate a strong sense of duty in its members, if rights are to be anything more than useless bits of paper. Rights ought not to be given but purchased, and the price is duty. You can have many things on the cheap; but the moral life isn't one of them.

But this brings us face-to-face with what is, to my mind, the strangest cultural shift within the liberal worldview, one that promises to sow even more confusion than liberalism inherently requires: the growing advocacy of "animal rights." Properly understood, the concept of a right—and the attendant ideas of

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duty, responsibility, law, and obedience—enshrines what is distinctive in the human condition. To spread the concept beyond our species is to jeopardize our dignity as moral beings, who live in judgment of one another and of themselves.

In 1991, a group of animal-rights activists sued on behalf of Kama, a dolphin trained at great expense by the U.S. Navy and transferred to the Naval Ocean Systems Center in Hawaii from his previous home in a Boston aquarium. The suit held that Kama's life would be in jeopardy in his new environment, and that his rights were therefore violated by his forcible transfer. The court threw out the case on the grounds that Kama, being a dolphin, could not sue, either in Hawaii or in Massachusetts.

Now, a decade later, the lawyer who represented Kama, Steven M. Wise, has published a book, *Rattling the Cage*, which advocates the rights of animals and argues that a law granting rights to people but not to animals is no more tenable than a law granting rights to freemen but not to slaves. Jane Goodall, the gorilla ethologist, calls the book "the animals' Magna Carta," and Harvard has appointed its author to teach "animal-rights law"—by no means the first example of a professor appointed to teach a non-existent subject. Wise is also founder and president of Harvard's "Center for the Expansion of Fundamental Rights"—or "Center for Moral Inflation," as conservatives might prefer to call it.

Meanwhile, Princeton University's Center for the Study of Human Values has appointed the Australian philosopher Peter Singer, author of the seminal *Animal Liberation* (1975), to a prestigious chair, causing widespread disgust on account of Singer's vociferous support for euthanasia. (Defenders of animal rights not infrequently also advocate the killing of useless humans.) Singer's works, remarkably for a philosophy professor, contain little or no philosophical argument. They derive their radical moral conclusions from a vacuous utilitarianism that counts the pain and pleasure of all living things as equally significant and that ignores just about everything that has been said in our philosophical tradition about the real distinction between persons and animals. Although Steven Wise surprisingly makes no mention of Singer, their simultaneous prominence in the American academic establishment only further confirms the suspicion that animals are next on the agenda.

Nor is this great cultural shift confined to America. The English have always been sentimental

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about animals; the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals came into existence almost two centuries ago. Yet until recently Englishmen have managed to combine this sentimentality toward pets with a love of hunting, shooting, and fishing, and with a robust attitude to the farming of livestock. Now, though, advocates are relentlessly pressuring the government to abolish fox hunting, and a bill to criminalize the raising of animals for their pelts is well on its way to becoming law—the first legislative success of a worldwide campaign, in which celebrity after celebrity has displayed her virtue by casting off her furs.

At a time of agricultural crisis, what sense does it make to outlaw a legitimate and profitable species of farming? Nevertheless, vociferous Labourites have set their hearts against fur, or at any rate against the people who wear it, and they are determined to force their views on the rest of us. It helps, too, that the Political Animal Lobby, which has long campaigned against the fur trade, gave the party a donation of a million pounds at the last election.

The question of fur offers a window into the emotions that cloud the issue of animal welfare. It first came to our attention in Britain some five years ago, when a campaigning group placed ads all over the railway stations showing a woman in hoity-toity attitudes partially wrapped in the fur of a vixen. The caption read: TWO SPOILED BITCHES. Although I have never much liked fur clothing, associating it with the more light-hearted forms of sexual perversion celebrated by Sacher-Masoch in *Venus in Furs*, I had never imagined it to be a sin, still less a crime, to dress up in it. The ad shocked me, not only because of the weirdness of the moral views it conveyed, but because it was manifestly calculated to fan hatred toward people purely on account of their way of dressing. The law of sedition, forbidding the stirring up of disaffection toward any group of Her Majesty's subjects, holds such things to be crimes, and in due course the Fur Farmers' Association was able to bring a successful civil suit leading to the removal of the ads.

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Urbanities

Now the woman in the hateful poster was wearing a fox fur, and one reason for objecting to this is that foxes are wild animals, whose fur can be obtained in a usable condition only if they are trapped. Indeed, the campaign against the fur trade began as a campaign against trapping, and its partial success in Canada has led to the destruction of the Eskimo communities that depended upon trapping for their livelihood. My own view is that human communities should not be sacrificed for the sake of wild animals, unless there is a real ecological emergency, such as that caused by the incessant burning of the Indonesian forests. But if people choose to sacrifice the Eskimos to the arctic fox, in today's culture it is hard (though right) to accuse them of deficient sympathies.

If you really want to bring trapping to an end, fur farming is the answer; after all, the wives and mistresses of the Russian mafia will never dress in anything except fur, and here is the humane way to keep them supplied with it. But, the Labour Party argues, it is a matter of "public morality" that we should put a stop to this appalling industry. Some crusaders have been so incensed as to release mink from the fur farms into the wild, causing enormous suffering to our native wildlife and to the mink themselves, who often try to find their way back to the comforts that they knew on the farm, once they have tasted the alternative.

So why is it okay to raise animals for their meat but not for the fur that covers it? What matter of principle is involved? Or is the reference to "public morality" just sanctimonious claptrap? The answer is to be found in that ad at the railway stations. Suppose that the vixen had died a natural death. How many spoiled bitches does that leave? One surely. And it is against her that the legislation is aimed. Maria Eagle, the Member of Parliament who has led the move to ban fur farming, put the point succinctly. She wished to end "the cruel exploitation of essentially wild animals for what is an inessential luxury item." The fur farm need not be cruel, and mink are no more and no less "essentially wild" than deer or ostriches, both of which are raised in England for their meat. The one truth in this loaded utterance is that fur is a luxury. But to imagine that we have the right to outlaw luxuries, merely because they offend our class-conscious sensibilities, is to base our legislation not on public morality but on private snobberies.

The spectacle of a Parliament, most of whose members behave as though elected to represent animals, is troubling enough. But beyond the legislature, England has countless animal-rights groups devoted to abolishing this or that traditional sport involving animals—from hare coursing to horse racing. Champions of the rights of calves, who have intimidated truck drivers and blockaded ports, have virtually ended the export of live veal to the continent. Since only there is veal a regular part of the diet, it is no longer possible for dairy farmers to keep their calves. Most are now slaughtered at birth—not much of a gain for the calves.

Nor does the law deter animal-rights activists. One of the most dangerous terrorist groups in Britain is the Animal Liberation Front, which sends parcel bombs to scientists engaged in animal experiments and to other alleged "animal abusers." Activists have surrounded a farm that bred cats for medical experiments, forced it to close, brought ruin on the farmer, assaulted his wife, terrorized his family, and ensured, as a result, that cats are now imported from places where they are reared less kindly, in order that the experiments should continue.

Having destroyed the cat farm, the activists then turned their attention to one of the scientists who made use of it. Oxford professor Colin Blakemore experiments on cats in order to find a cure for blindness in children. His experiments involve sewing up the eyes of kittens and studying their development when deprived of stimulation. The eyes are eventually unsewn, and the kittens thereafter lead normal, privileged lives as pets. Professor Blakemore has had to contend with a hostile crowd picketing his house. Leading the crowd is a screaming woman who accuses the professor of having stolen her cat, whose vivisected remains lie, she asserts, on a shelf in the professor's icebox. Her followers spray paint remover on Blakemore's car, causing severe burns to the only cat that has in fact passed the professor's garden gate—the one belonging to his children. Threats, abuse,

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and violence follow Blakemore wherever he goes, and no amount of evidence to show that the cats used in his experiments graduate in time to the world of pets will deter his tormentors.

What are we to make of all this? Steven Wise's book contains a generous measure of legal and constitutional history, but no philosophy other than a few second-hand snippets. His authority is not philosophy but science—and in particular the studies in primatology that have told us how very like the apes we are, and how very like us are the apes. The movement in favor of animal rights is not merely the latest example of the "rights inflation" that liberals have always promoted. It is part of a larger movement of ideas away from the other-worldly dogmas of religion to the this-worldly theories of science. Science now stands at the apex of our beliefs, and a morality derived from any other source is apt to appear quaint and outmoded. And when science is in charge, duties sink still further into the background, since only God can give commands, and God is in retirement.

Of course, when science is used in this way, as the major premise in a revisionist morality, it is abused. Properly understood, science is silent about our duties; but it is also silent about our rights. It is not an alternative source of moral judgments, since it has no moral authority at all. The aim of science is to explain, not to justify. Good and evil, right and wrong, duty and freedom, are concepts that play no part in its theories and cannot be derived from them. Those who rely on science for their moral outlook depend heavily on popularizers like Stephen Jay Gould and Richard Dawkins, who make science seem relevant to our moral choices only by dressing its neutral theories in the borrowed clothes of judgment. No more influential book has appeared in recent decades than Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene*, the very title of which reveals how far the author is from true scientific thinking. To describe the gene as selfish is to think of it as a moral being, capable of generous and ungenerous actions. It is to re-assume the anthropomorphic and magical ways of thinking that science is supposed to dispel.

Still, given enough science to be struck by our resemblance to the apes, but not so much as to be reminded of the difference, you can easily fall into the new habits of mind exemplified by Wise and Singer. Instead of seeing man as the summit of creation, the vehicle of God's purpose on earth, and the sovereign over all other species, science tells us, according to Wise, that the human species is merely one branch of the great tree of evolution, with no privileged place in the scheme of things. And it is true that this is what modern science says.

However, the scientific truth about *homo sapiens* is not the whole truth about mankind. We are members of the human species. But we are also

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persons and, as such, animated through and through by an ideal of what that species might achieve. The concept of the person has no place in biological science, for "person" is not a biological category. Nevertheless it is fundamental to all our legal and moral thinking.

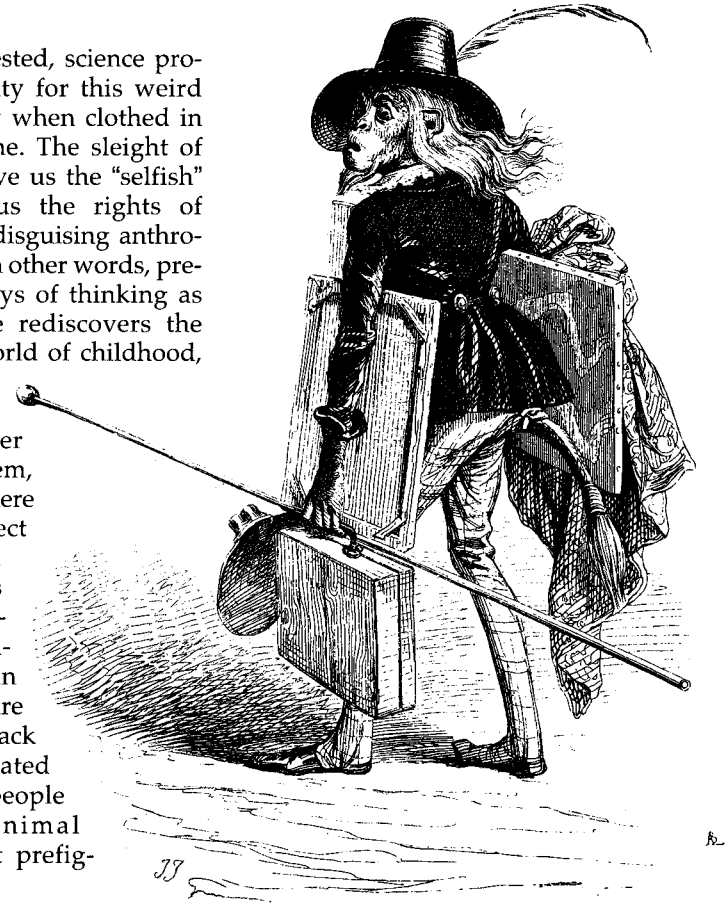
The Judeo-Christian tradition would explain the idea of the person in theological terms. But the concept is taken from Roman law (which in turn borrowed it from the theater: *persona* means mask), and it implies no theological commitment. A person is a potential member of a free community—a community in which members can lead lives of their own. Although other animals are individuals, with thoughts, desires, and characters that distinguish them, human beings are individuals in another and stronger sense, in that they are self-created beings. They realize themselves, through freely chosen projects and through an understanding of what they are and ought to be.

Negotiation, compromise, and agreement form the basis of all successful human communities. And this is the true ground of the moral distinction that we make, and ought to make, between our own and other species. The concepts of right, duty, justice, personality, responsibility, and so on have a sense for us largely because we deploy them in our negotiations and can invoke by their means the ground rules of social order. They define strategies with which we coordinate our social life, but which we can only use when dealing with others who also use them.

To use these strategies on animals is to misuse them; for if animals have rights, then they have duties too. Some of them—foxes, wolves, cats, and killer whales—would be inveterate murderers and should be permanently locked up. Almost all would be habitual law-breakers. All would deserve punishments from time to time, though maybe they could hire lawyers like Steven Wise to argue that they could not possibly be blamed, since only humans are blameworthy.

But this means that the apes appeal to animal-rights activists for precisely the wrong reason—namely, that they look like people and behave like people, while making no moral demands. The apes are re-made as versions of ourselves, purged of the guilt that comes from the attempt to lead the life to which we, as moral beings, are condemned: the life of judgment. Nothing impedes our sympathy for the chimpanzee and the bonobo, since their lives are blameless. It is not that they do no wrong, but that "right" and "wrong" here make no sense.

As I suggested, science provides authority for this weird morality only when clothed in moral doctrine. The sleight of hand that gave us the "selfish" gene gives us the rights of baboons. By disguising anthropomorphic (in other words, prescientific) ways of thinking as science, Wise rediscovers the enchanted world of childhood, in which animals live as Beatrix Potter describes them, in an Eden where "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." By abusing evolutionary biology in this way, we are able to read back the sophisticated conduct of people into the animal behavior that prefigures it.



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And that explains, in part, the appeal of the animal-rights movement. It shifts the focus away from moral beings toward creatures in every respect less demanding—creatures like dogs, which return our affection regardless of our merits, or cats, which maintain an amiable pretense of affection while caring for no one at all (a fact always vehemently and fruitlessly denied by their keepers). The world of animals is a world without judgment, where embarrassment, remorse, guilt, and penitence are unknown, and where human beings can escape from the burden of moral emotions. In another way, therefore, those who tell us that we have no special place in the scheme of things create a place for us that is just as special. By focusing our human attitudes on animals, we are playing at God, standing always apart from and above our victims, smiling down on their innocent ways, removed from the possibility of judgment ourselves, and, in our exaltation, imagining that we confer the greatest benefit on those whom we patronize.

A case in point is the rabbit, an attractive animal, celebrated and humanized in children's literature. Alone in its cage, utterly dependent on the child who feeds it, bright-eyed and impassive as it is stroked and cuddled, the rabbit seems to be in its element: made for human companionship and basking in human love. It is the quintessence of the pet, mutely reflecting its owner's utterly fallacious view of himself as the kindly provider and justified guardian of this precious piece of life. A particularly syrupy by-product of this attitude—a children's book picturing rabbits in unctuous poses and entitled *Guess How Much I Love You*—is currently doing the rounds, having the same effect on human software as the I Love You virus on the computer.

As a matter of fact, however, rabbits are gregarious animals, for whom there is only one mental torture greater than solitary confinement, which is that of being cuddled by a member of a large rabbit-eating species. The pet rabbit learns to adapt to its conditions, much as human beings learned to adapt to Stalin's gulag. Being unable to shift its eyes, the rabbit maintains its generous stare even when held by a smelly omnivore emitting vile drooling noises and smiling down on it with a mouth full of teeth. Correct behavior is rewarded, after all, with a piece of lettuce. In this way the rabbit teeters from terror to terror and from day to day.

In the wild, however, in the teeming burrow where he mates promiscuously with his kind, where the only smell is the smell of rabbit, and where every intruder is regarded with abhorrence, the rabbit takes his revenge: eating crops, destroying saplings, and undermining paths and fields. Anybody who has had to contend with rabbits will know that these creatures, which by their nature are available in the wild only in large supplies, are far from lovable.

It is at this point that the advocate of animal rights steps in. Like the child, he imagines the rabbit still dressed in its Beatrix Potter trousers, enjoying a quiet domestic life below ground. For him the warren is just like a human community—founded by negotiation and agreement, structured by rights,

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and entitled to protection from the law. To shoot such defenseless animals seems to him like a crime, and he campaigns vigorously for a law that will make it so.

Of course, he is selective in his passions: foxes, rabbits, and badgers can count on his support; rats and mice don't get a look in. But this only enhances the damage done to the historical equilibrium that has enabled humans and animals to live together on realistic terms. It is this equilibrium that is maintained by the old arts of hunting. And in those old arts you glimpse another, more ancient and more healthy relation between man and beast—the relation between Homer's Odysseus and the old hound Argus, first to recognize his master on his return to Ithaca, or the relation between Alexander and Bucephalus, which caused the conqueror to found a city in memory of his heroic horse. The unsentimental love between man and beast that comes about when they are engaged together in some act of war or predation is, indeed, the nearest that animals attain to equality with the human species—and it is a love that is deeply horrible to the defenders of animal rights for that very reason. For it is a love founded in the aspect of animals that they put out of mind—the relentless life-and-death struggle that is the normal condition of life in the wild.

This love exists, too, among the sworn enemies of rabbits—the keepers of ferrets, who solve the rabbit problem in nature's way. The ferret is as furry and appealing to the sight as a rabbit, and would feature in children's books, in some toothless version, were it not for the fact that nobody knows anything about it except those who know everything, and who love the ferret with the severe military love that attaches the falconer to his bird and the huntsman to his hounds. Our local ferreter lifts his precious animal from its box as though handling a newborn baby and coos to it quietly in a private language far richer in syllables than the sparse dialect that he keeps for human use. And when he slips the ferret into the warren and watches it slide into the darkness, his face is full of a tender anxiety, like the face of a father whose son is leaving for the wars.

Such "working" relations with animals are not only good for the animals: they are also good for us. For they are a strong reminder of the fact that, whatever we do, it is we who are in charge. Why is this? This question brings us full circle to the American Constitution and the vision on which it is founded—the vision of human beings as a distinct order of creation, the guardians of the natural order, answerable for their lives and duty bound to make the best of them. That is the vision that justifies our belief in rights as the necessary conditions of human fulfillment. Take away the moral life and its goal of human excellence, and the talk of rights becomes meaningless.

The lover of baboons who goes to live with his tribe knows full well that he can regain civilization at any time; he goes armed with medicines and books and cameras—perhaps even with a mobile telephone. He respects and even loves the creatures with whom he lives, and is in his turn respected, after a fashion. But he knows that, when it comes to any real decision for the future, it is he alone who can make it. Indeed, there is no greater reminder of the distinctiveness of our condition than the emotions that overwhelm us in the presence of a tribe of apes. People like Jane Goodall, who take with them into the wild a spirit of creative compassion, exemplify Dante's words:

Considerate la vostra semenza:
Fatti non foste a viver
come bruti,
Ma per segue virtute e
conoscenza.

"You were not made to live as brutes but to follow virtue and knowledge."

If the apes survive, it will be because we decide (spurred on by Jane Goodall) to save their habitats. And the same will be true, in time, of virtually all the larger animals. And if domestic animals are bred and cared for, it is because we have an interest in their products. In all our dealings with the animals, the inherent mastership of the human race displays itself. And this only goes to show that we alone have the duty to look after the animals, because we alone have duties. The corollary is inescapable: we alone have rights. ■

J.J. GRANDVILLE (5)

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Oh, to be in England

Lost in the Ghetto

Theodore Dalrymple

One of the terrible fates that can befall a human being is to be born intelligent or sensitive in an English slum. It is like a long, slow, exquisite torture devised by a sadistic deity from whose malevolent clutches escape is almost impossible.

Such was not always the case. My father was born in an English slum in the years before the First World War. In the borough in which he was born, one in every eight children died in his first year. But in those benighted times, when some London children, too poor to buy shoes, went to school barefoot, the "vicious cycle of poverty" had yet to be discovered. It had not yet occurred to the rulers of the land that the circumstances of a person's birth should seal his destiny. And so my father, having been found intelligent by his teachers, was taught Latin, French, German, mathematics, science, English literature, and history, as if he were fully capable of entry into the stream of higher civilization.

When he died, I found his school textbooks still among his possessions, and they were of a rigor and difficulty that would terrify a modern teacher, let alone child. But he, who was never generous in his praise of others and often imputed the worst of motives to his fellow beings, remembered his teachers with the deepest respect and affection: for they had not only taught him his lessons but had devoted much of their spare time to taking their intelligent slum children, himself included, to museums and concerts, to demonstrate to them that the life of the slum was not the only life there was. In this way, my father was awakened to the very possibility of possibility.

A child born in a slum today with the same high intelligence as my father would be vanishingly unlikely ever to find such mentors. After all, today's teachers, steeped in the idea that it is wrong to order civilizations, cultures, or ways of life hierarchically, would deny either the existence or the value of a higher civilization, and would in any case be incapable of imparting it. For them, there is no height or depth, superiority or inferiority, profundity or shallowness; there is only difference. They even doubt that there is a right and wrong way to spell a word or construct a sentence—a view buttressed by such popular and supposedly authoritative works as Professor Steven Pinker's *The Language Instinct* (written, of course, with neither orthographical nor grammatical errors). Today's teachers assume that the slum child is fully equipped culturally by the environment in which he lives. His speech is by definition adequate to his needs, his tastes by definition acceptable and no worse or lower than any others. There is no reason, therefore, to induct him into anything.

A slum child would find no mentors such as my father found also because the belief in the equality of cultures that is a long-established pedagogic orthodoxy has now seeped down into the population at large. Today's slum dwellers are aggressively convinced of the sufficiency of their knowledge, however restricted it might be, and of their own cultural life, of whatever it might consist. My older patients use the word "educated" as a term of approbation; my younger patients, never. When my father was a child, no one doubted what it was to be educated, or questioned the value of an education such as the one he received; but since teachers and parents now regard all cultural manifestations and fields of human knowledge as of equal worth, why waste the effort either to impart or to receive as rigorous, difficult, and unnatural an education as my father received, when any other training (or none at all) would be as good? Worse, such an effort would be to impose an arbitrary standard of worth—a mere disguise for the continuation of the hegemony of a traditional elite—and would thereby undermine the self-confidence of the majority and reinforce social divisions.

Unfortunately, the culture of the slums is deeply unsatisfying to intelligent people in the long run. The tragedy is that, even though the average level of intelligence in the slums is probably lower than elsewhere, there are very many intelligent people who have the misfortune to be born in them. And we do everything possible to ensure that that is where they stay.

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They come to realize at different stages of their lives that something is wrong with the culture by which they are surrounded. Some realize it when they reach their teens, others only when their own children go to school. Many are unable to put their finger on what exactly is wrong: at 30, they are aware only of an absence. This absence turns out to be a lack of any subject for their minds to work upon other than the day-to-day flux of their existence.

It is well-recognized that intelligent children who are not sufficiently challenged in school, and who are made to repeat lessons they have already understood merely because others in the class, slower to learn than they, have not yet mastered them, frequently become disruptive, badly behaved, and even delinquent; it is less well recognized that this destructive pattern persists well into adult life. The bored—among whom are those whose level of intelligence is grossly mismatched with the requirements of their cultural environment—frequently solve the problem by fomenting easily avoided and completely foreseeable crises in their personal lives. The mind, like nature, abhors a vacuum: and if no absorbing interest has developed in childhood and adolescence, such an interest is soon manufactured from the materials to hand. Man is at least as much a problem-creating as a problem-solving animal. Better a crisis than the permanent boredom of meaninglessness.

Despite official genuflections in the direction of diversity and tolerance, the sad fact is that the culture of the slums is monolithic and deeply intolerant. Any child who tries to resist the blandishments of that culture can count on no support or defense from teachers or any other adult, who now equate both freedom and democracy with the tyranny of the majority. Many of my intelligent patients from the slums recount how, in school, they expressed a desire to learn, only to suffer mockery, excommunication, and in some

THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

A ghetto upbringing would turn the Ugly Duckling into an ugly duck.

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instances outright violence from their peers. One intelligent child of 15, who had taken an overdose as a suicidal gesture, said that she was subjected to constant teasing and abuse by her peers. "They say I'm stupid," she told me, "because I'm clever."

Teachers rarely protect such children or encourage them to resist absorption into the culture that will all too clearly imprison them in the social condition into which they were born: for teachers have themselves generally absorbed uncritically the notion that social justice—meaning little more than an equal distribution of income—is the *summum bonum* of human existence. I have heard two teachers expound the theory that, as social mobility reinforces the existing social structure, it delays the achievement of social justice by depriving the lower classes of militants and potential leaders. Thus to encourage an individual child to escape his heritage of continual soap opera and pop music, tabloid newspapers, poverty, squalor, and domestic violence is, in the eyes of many teachers, to encourage class treachery. It also conveniently absolves teachers of the tedious responsibility for the welfare of individual pupils.

Still, children arise in the unlikeliest places with ambitions very different from their peers, and fortunately not all teachers believe that no child can escape the slums unless all do. One of my patients, for example, early conceived a passion for French culture and literature (she never arrives in the hospital without a volume of Hugo, Balzac, or Baudelaire, which is a little like seeing a polar bear in the jungle). She decided at an early age that she would study French at university and was fortunate, considering the school she attended, to find a teacher who did not actively discourage her. But the cost to her in ordinary social relations with her peers was incalculable: she had to sit apart from them in the classroom and create her own enclosed little world in the midst of constant disorder and noise; she was mocked, teased, threatened, and humiliated; she was jeered at when standing at the bus stop to go home; she was deprived of friends and sexually assaulted by boys who despised, and perhaps secretly feared, her evident devotion to books; excrement was put through her mailbox at home (a common expression of social disapproval in our brave New Britain). As for her parents—of whom she was fortunate enough to have two—they did not understand her. Why could she not be like everyone else—and leave them in peace? It wasn't even as if a taste for French literature led automatically to highly paid employment.

She went to university and was happy for three years. For the first time in her life, she met people whose mental world extended beyond their own very restricted experience. Her performance at university was creditable, though not brilliant, for by her own admission she lacked originality. She had always wanted to teach, thinking there was no nobler calling than to awaken the minds of the young to the cultural riches of which they would otherwise remain unaware; but on graduation, lacking savings, she returned to her parents for the sake of economy.

She found a job teaching French nearby, in the kind of school in which she herself had been educated. She was back in a world in which knowledge was no better than ignorance, and correction, whether of spelling or of conduct, was by definition a personal insult, an outrage to the ego. Who was she—who was any adult, in fact—to tell children what they should learn or do (a sensible enough question, impossible to answer, if you believe in the equal worth of all human activity)? Once more she found herself mocked, teased, and humiliated, and was powerless to prevent it. Eventually, one of her pupils—if that is quite the word to describe the youth in question—tried to rape her, and she brought her career as a teacher to a premature end.

Now she would consider any paid employment that would take her away from the area in which she was born, or any area like it: that is to say, at least a third of Great Britain. Until her escape, however, she remains trapped in her parents' home, with no one to talk to about those things that interest her, either inside the house or out. Perhaps, she mused, it would have been better had she surrendered to the majority while she was still at school: for her heroic struggle had brought

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her little but three years' respite from misery.

Hers is not an isolated case by any means. With Britain's immense apparatus of welfare, which consumes about a fifth of the national income, there is little or nothing to spare for an 18-year-old girl such as the one who consulted me last week, who is making the most valiant efforts to escape her dismal background. Her father was a drunk who beat her mother every day of his married life, and quite often the three children as well, until finally he decided that enough was enough and deserted them altogether. Unfortunately, my patient's younger brother stepped into the breach and became just as violent as the father had been. He beat his mother and one day broke a glass and used its jagged edge to inflict an extremely serious wound on my patient's left arm, from which she still, two years later, has not entirely recovered and probably never will.

Endowed apparently by nature with a forceful personality, my patient insisted not only on calling the police but in pressing charges against her brother, who was 14 at the time. The magistrates gave him a conditional discharge. So appalled was my patient's mother at her lack of family solidarity that she threw her out of the house, at the age of 16, to fend for herself. This put an end to her plan—formulated under the most inauspicious circumstances—to continue her education and become a lawyer.

At 16, as she then was, she was deemed by social services to be too old for an orphanage but not old enough to receive any welfare benefits, and the only accommodation that the local apparatus of welfare could find for her was a room in a house used to resettle criminals. While her brother received every attention from social workers, she received none at all, since there was nothing wrong with her. Her criminal roommate in the halfway house was what she called "a bag-head"—a heroin addict—and also a professional thief.

As intelligent as she was forceful, my patient found herself a job as a clerk in a local law office and has worked there ever since. She was thenceforth charged the full economic rent for her miserable room, and all pleas to the authorities on her part to be relocated in public housing were turned down on the grounds that she was already adequately accommodated and in any case was unfit yet to manage her own affairs. As to public assistance for further full time education, that was out of the question, since in order to pursue such full time education she would have to give up her job: and she would then be considered to have made herself voluntarily unemployed and thus unentitled to public assistance. But if she cared to become pregnant, why then, public assistance was at hand, in generous quantities.

The morals of her story could hardly have been clearer. First, the inhabitants of the milieu from which she came considered that her duty not to inform the authorities far outweighed her right not to be maltreated. Second, the authorities themselves considered the attack upon her as unworthy of serious attention. Third, she would receive no public help at all in escaping from the circumstances into which she had been born. To treat her as an especially deserving case, after all, would be to imply that there were undeserving cases; and to say that there were undeserving cases would be tantamount to admitting that one way of living is preferable—morally, economically, culturally, spiritually—to another. This is a thought that must at all costs be kept at bay, or the whole ideology of modern education and welfare collapses in a heap. It might be argued, of course, that it was precisely the lack of public assistance that put iron in my patient's soul in the first place (she was still determined one day to qualify as a lawyer): but that is the answer to a different question, and is besides a little harsh for my taste.

But at least these two girls, each remarkable in her way, had somehow glimpsed the existence of another world, even if neither had yet succeeded in fully entering it. Their awareness that the culture of the slums was insufficient to sustain an intelligent person came to them early in life—how or why they could no longer remember.

This realization comes considerably later to most of my intelligent patients, however,

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who complain in their thirties of a vague, persistent, and severe dissatisfaction with their present existence. The excitements of their youth are over: in the culture of the slums, men and women are past their prime by the age of 25. Their personal lives are in disarray, to put it kindly: the men have fathered children with whom they have little or no contact; the women, preoccupied with meeting the increasingly imperious demands of these same children, drudge at ill-paid, boring, and impermanent jobs. (The illegitimacy rate in Britain has recently passed the 40 percent mark, and while most births are still registered in the names of two parents, relations between the sexes grow ever more unstable.) The entertainments that once seemed so compelling to both men and women—indeed, the whole purpose of life—seem so no longer. These patients are listless, irritable, and disgruntled. They indulge in self-destructive, anti-social, or irrational behavior: they drink too much, involve themselves in meaningless quarrels, quit their jobs when they can't afford to, run up debts on trifles, pursue obviously disastrous relationships, and move house as if the problem were in the walls that surround them.

The diagnosis is boredom, a much underestimated factor in the explanation of undesirable human conduct. As soon as the word is mentioned, they pounce upon it, almost with relief: recognition of the problem is instant, though they had not thought of it before. Yes, they are bored—bored to the very depths of their being.

But why are they bored, they ask me? The answer, of course, is that they have never applied their intelligence either to their work, their personal lives, or their leisure, and intelligence is a distinct disadvantage when it is not used: it bites back. Reviewing their life stories, they see for the first time that at every point they have chosen the line of least resistance, the least strenuous path. They never received any guidance, because all agreed that one path was as good as another. They never awoke to the fact that a life is a biography, not a series of disconnected moments, more or less pleasurable but increasingly tedious and unsatisfying unless one imposes a purposive pattern upon them.

Their education was an enforced and seemingly interminable irrelevance: nothing their parents or their teachers told them, nothing they absorbed from the culture around them, led them to suppose that their early efforts at school, or lack of them, would have any effect upon their subsequent lives. The jobs they took as soon as they were able were purely to fund their pleasures of the moment. They formed relationships with the opposite sex whimsically, without thought of the future. Their children were born as instruments, either to repair troubled relations or to fill an emotional and spiritual void, and were soon found wanting in either capacity. Their friends—for the first time perceived as of lesser intelligence—now bore them. And, for the first time wishing to escape the artificial, self-stimulated crises that amuse them no longer, they suffer the undisguised *taedium vitae* of the slums.

Intelligence is not the only quality that the modern culture of the slums penalizes, of course. Almost any manifestation of finer feeling, any sign of weakness, any attempt at withdrawal into a private world, is mercilessly preyed upon and exploited. A cultivated manner, a refusal to swear in public, an intellectual interest, a distaste for coarseness, a protest against littering, are the objects of mockery and obloquy: and so it takes courage, even heroism, to behave with common decency.

One of my patients is a stout woman, aged 50, who would once have been called an old maid. She is completely harmless and is in fact a woman of the most delicate sensibility. She is so timid that a harsh word is sufficient to reduce her to tears. She always apologizes to me for the inconvenience she believes that she causes me by her very existence; I have never been able to reassure her completely on that score. She is the Miss Flite of our times.

Needless to say, the life of such a person in a modern British slum is a living nightmare. The children in her street mock her unceasingly when she leaves her house; they push excrement through her letterbox as a joke. She has long since given up appealing to their mothers for help, since they always side with

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their children and consider any adverse comment on their behavior as an insult to them personally. Far from correcting their children, they threaten her with further violence. The relentless, gleeful revelations in the press, radio, and television of any wrongdoing by the authorities and the professions, unbalanced by any criticism whatever of members of the general public, have caused an atrophy of the faculty of self-criticism and prepare the mind always to look outwards, never inwards, for the source of dissatisfaction and malfeasance. *Vox populi, vox dei*—with every person a god in his own pantheon.

My patient is, of course, an easy target for burglars and robbers. Her house has been broken into five times in the last year, and she has been robbed in the street three times in the same period, twice in the presence of passersby.

Such a person can expect no sympathy from the authorities. The police have told her more than once that the fault is hers: someone like her should not live somewhere like this. The streets, in other words, should be left to the hooligans, the vandals, and the robbers, to ply their inevitable trades in peace, and it is the duty of citizens to avoid them. It is no part of the state's duty to secure the streets against them.

In such circumstances, decency is almost synonymous with vulnerability: a quality with which the authorities have no sympathy. Another patient of mine, a younger woman of respectable working-class background and unblemished character, despaired of finding a compatible man, her experience in that sphere having been uniformly disastrous. She decided thenceforth to live as a spinster, devoting her life to the rescue of stray animals. Her house, unfortunately, was in a street in a public housing project, in which all the other houses had been gradually abandoned after repeated vandalism and were now boarded up. The street then became a rendezvous and pick-up point for drug dealers, who did not hesitate to break into my patient's house to make use of her telephone (saving expenses on their own cellular phones) and help themselves to whatever food was present. They broke into her house even when she was in it, mocking her fear and taunting her with her inability to do anything about it. Her largest expense soon became the telephone bills they ran up. They threatened her with death if she went to the police.

She did go to the police, however, and also to the housing authorities. Their advice was the same: she should buy a guard dog. She followed their advice, but it made little difference, because the dog soon grew used to the drug dealers, who fed it tid-bits. But my patient grew to love her dog.

My patient asked the housing authorities to move her elsewhere. At first—that is to say, for two years—her request was turned down, because she was deemed to have insufficient reasons for wishing to move. When finally the authorities agreed to find her somewhere else to live, they offered her an apartment, in which, however, it was forbidden to keep animals. My patient pointed out that she had a dog, a creature upon which she now lavished all her capacity for affection, a fact perfectly obvious to anyone who spoke to her about her life for even a few moments. The housing authorities were adamant: take it or leave it. In vain did she point out that it was the housing authorities who had advised her to get the dog in the first place. The argument of the housing authorities was that if she were really serious about moving from her current inferno, she would take whatever she was given. After all, hundreds of thousands of British fathers abandoned their offspring without a moment's thought: what was all this sentimental fuss about a brute animal?

Life in the British slums demonstrates what happens when the population at large, and the authorities as well, lose all faith in a hierarchy of values. All kinds of pathology result: where knowledge is not preferable to ignorance and high culture to low, the intelligent and the sensitive suffer a complete loss of meaning. The intelligent self-destruct; the sensitive despair. And where decent sensitivity is not nurtured, encouraged, supported, or protected, brutality abounds. The absence of standards, as Ortega y Gasset remarked, is the beginning of barbarism: and modern Britain is well past the beginning. ■

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Letters

School Suspension . . . of Reason

To the Editor:

Kay S. Hymowitz leaves your readers with an egregiously inadequate assessment of the current state of the law with respect to the capacity of the federal courts to inject themselves into matters of school discipline ("Who Killed School Discipline?" Spring 2000). She opens by referring to the six Decatur, Illinois, students whose expulsions were challenged last year by Jesse Jackson, but fails to note that the lawsuit brought by the students was summarily dismissed in January by a federal district judge, who noted that "a federal court's role in school disciplinary matters is very limited."

The judge—a Clinton appointee, by the way—was following a body of precedent of which Hymowitz makes no mention. While she discusses the U.S. Supreme Court's 1969 *Tinker* decision and its 1975 *Goss* decision, she fails to note that later opinions of the Court, especially its 1988 *Hazelwood* decision, have severely limited the capacity of the federal courts to oversee the disciplinary actions of school officials.

A simple statistic serves as a useful corrective to Hymowitz's judge bashing. According to a report issued in April by the Justice Policy Institute, 3.1 million students were suspended or expelled from school in 1997, nearly 6.8 percent of all students. This is an increase from 3.7 percent of students in 1974. Quite apart from the question of whether this is a statistic of which we may be proud, the fact is that school officials have not been refraining from exercising discipline out of fear that the federal courts will swoop down upon them.

Mark Kozlowski
New York University School of Law

Kay S. Hymowitz responds:

I refer Mr. Kozlowski to page 38 of my article, where I anticipate his objection. The point is worth repeating: Yes, the courts have been siding with the schools in matters of discipline for some time now, very possibly since the Supreme Court's decision in *Bethel* v. *Fraser* in 1986. However, if you talk to superintendents, members of school boards, and their attorneys, you find that they are less concerned with whether they can win in court than whether they will be sued in the first place. Win or lose, lawsuits are expensive and controversial—both qualities that bureaucrats tend to abhor. In their fear, they write obscure and legalistic policies, and practice a defensive and inflexible discipline whose purpose is less to socialize children than to "treat everyone exactly alike" so that their efforts will stand up in court.

I agree that the explosion in the number of school suspensions and zero tolerance policies are cause for alarm. But where Kozlowski doubtless sees them as a sign of a harsher judicial climate, I believe they are an inevitable consequence of the intrusion of the law into the schools. Adults have to socialize children some way or another, and if they are forced to do so with the courts setting the tone, the results are bound to be rigid and alien. A principal who suspends a kid for

JACK MOEBES/CORBIS

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"The book that helped shape [George W.] Bush's message"

—Austin American-Statesman

•NEW EDITION

The Dream and the Nightmare by Myron Magnet crystallized for me the impact the failed culture of the sixties had on our values and society. It helped create dependency on government undermine family, and eroded values which had stood the test of time and which are critical if we want a decent and hopeful tomorrow for every single American.

—Governor George W. Bush

THE DREAM AND THE NIGHTMARE

THE SIXTIES' LEGACY TO THE UNDERCLASS

MYRON MAGNET

and the *Wall Street Journal* remarked that "many writers have addressed this topic [of the underclass] but few have done so with more wisdom or more passion."

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Letters

bringing a plastic Nerf gun to school is not being a tough disciplinarian; he's just a frazzled bureaucrat with his head in an official codebook and his hand on the phone to the district lawyer.

Christian Charity?

To the editor:

Having been involved with Catholic Charities (CC) for almost two decades, I approached Brian C. Anderson's "How Catholic Charities Lost Its Soul" (Winter 2000) with keen interest.

I wish Anderson had done more to clarify that Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) and CC are not identical. CCUSA is commonly depicted as a giant social service agency with a multibillion-dollar budget and thousands of workers serving the poor at branch offices throughout the U.S. Unfortunately, CCUSA does little to disabuse the public of that misunderstanding. In reality, there is no giant national CC agency. Every diocese has its own ministry—usually, though not always, called CC—to serve the needy. CCUSA is best understood as a sort of trade association with which most, but not all, CC agencies voluntarily associate themselves, with varying degrees of enthusiasm. CCUSA is supported chiefly by steep membership fees paid by CC agencies that choose to be affiliated.

Diocesan agencies' dues support a bureaucracy significantly larger than the one that existed before the Cadre Report transformed the National Conference of Catholic Charities into today's CCUSA. So Anderson is correct in describing the enormous impact of the Cadre Report in redefining the mission of CC. Perhaps it is wishful thinking, but I believe the Cadre Report shaped CCUSA much more than it shaped CC agencies across the country.

The fundamental problem with CCUSA's heavy involvement with lobbying is not its characteristic bias toward statist solutions but rather its funding those activities with money donated for other purposes. The average Catholic would be disappointed to learn that a portion of his donation was being sent to Washington to pay lobbyists to advocate for policies with which he might legitimately disagree.

The article criticizes CCUSA for failing to emphasize "moral values and ethical conduct" in its ministry, and for neglecting to transform "the dysfunctional worldview that often lies at the root of their difficulties." While use of the word "often" does soften the position somewhat, the thrust of the article does seem to fault CCUSA for failing to operate on the very un-Catholic assumption that people would not be poor if only they led virtuous lives.

Faulty moral values and bad ethical choices can contribute to poverty—just as they can contribute to affluence. Whatever our socioeconomic circumstances, we all need help to stay on the straight and narrow—the rich no less than the poor. Lazarus may have come to his desperate circumstances—lying hungry at the rich man's gate, covered with sores— because of serious moral failings. Jesus's parable does not tell us how he got there but focuses our attention on the defective moral values of the rich man who fails to share his affluence with Lazarus. The rich man was not condemned for neglecting to correct Lazarus's moral failings.

Sometimes the Church merely feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, shelters the homeless, and comforts the lonely and abandoned. At other times, it is able to do the far more difficult work of helping the poor become more self-sufficient. In both instances, CC is doing the Lord's work—*that* is its basic mission.

Edward L. Maillet
Chancellor, Diocese of Tulsa
Tulsa, OK

Brian C. Anderson responds:

Chancellor Maillet's thoughtful note seems haunted by ambivalence. He wishes I distinguished more clearly between CCUSA and CC agencies, most of which associate with CCUSA "with varying degrees of enthusiasm." I made the distinction clearer than CCUSA itself does.

In talking to numerous local agency representatives across the country, I found that almost all shared the CCUSA worldview: that a big welfare state, doling out ever more services in an ask-no-questions way, is the best way to help the down-and-out. I don't share that view—and neither does Maillet. Before the transformation I describe having taken place in the 1960s, neither did CC.

Maillet charges that I operate on the un-Catholic assumption that the poor wouldn't be poor if only they led virtuous lives. But is it un-Catholic to look dispassionately at the causes of long-term poverty the better to help people escape it? I don't think so. Almost invariably, the long-term poor

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Letters

remain poor because of dysfunctional lives—having children out of wedlock, quitting school, doing drugs. We have a responsibility to help these people, as the Lazarus parable teaches. But providing value-free services *doesn't* help them, it hurts them by fostering helplessness and dependency. Living virtuous lives *would* help them, something CC once understood.

A Sportsmanship Fan

To the editor:

Brian C. Anderson and Peter Reinharz's "Bring Back Sportsmanship" (Spring 2000) should be read by every high school and college coach in the country. If the piece can get wider attention, there may still be time to save sportsmanship. But time is running out.

In any case, it is an important article and hits a chord that needs to be sounded more often.

Robert L. Dilenschneider
New York, NY

Competing Visions

To the Editor:

Myron Magnet's "The Cosmic Cathedral" (Spring 2000) ends on a provocative note: why not rebuild the acoustically poor Lincoln Center from the ground up? Indiana limestone is far better suited to New York's climate than Lincoln Center's travertine, which will only continue to degrade. Why spend $1.5 billion propping up sandcastles against the tide of time?

What would a new Lincoln Center look like? The scheme I would prefer—to no one's surprise—would be along classical lines, with all the buildings joined into one supremely decorative whole. Sculpture—isolated figures, statues in niches, clustered trophies, and friezes—would have a prominent role. Perhaps an architectural competition is in order to re-vision a classical, humanist Lincoln Center.

Lincoln Center is truly one of a kind, with its dense concentration of performance-art venues housing world-class companies. If only its architecture expressed the heights of human accomplishment achieved nightly upon its stages.

Henry Hope Reed
Classical America
New York, NY

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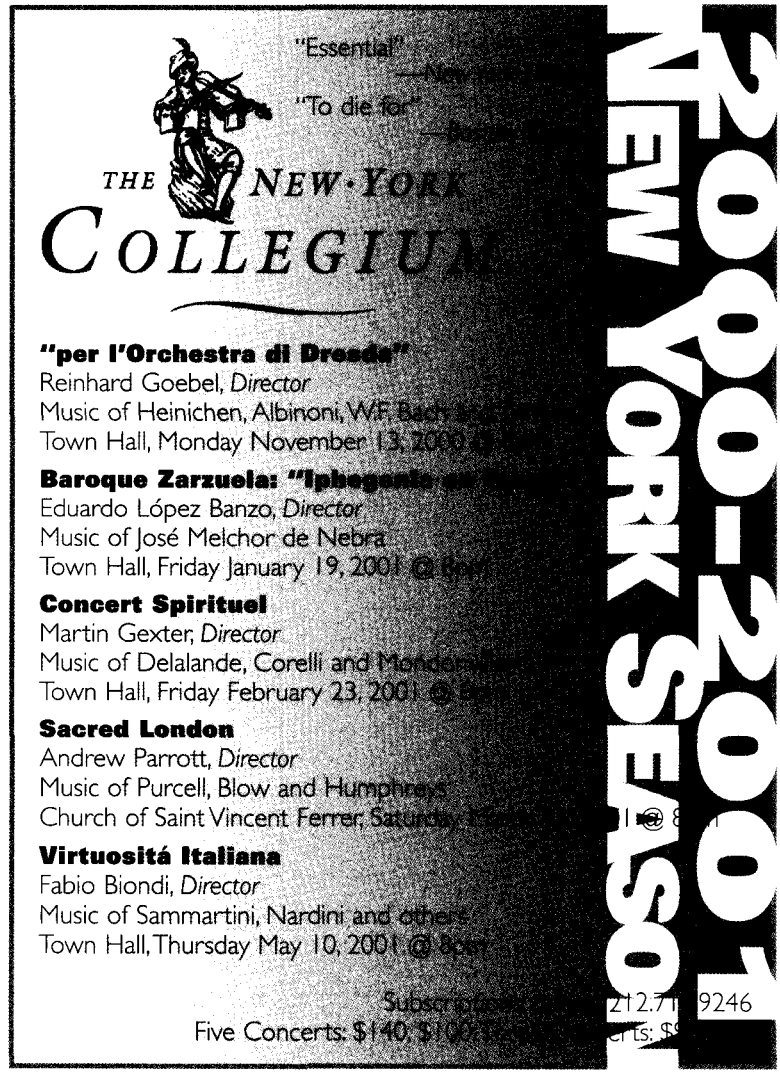

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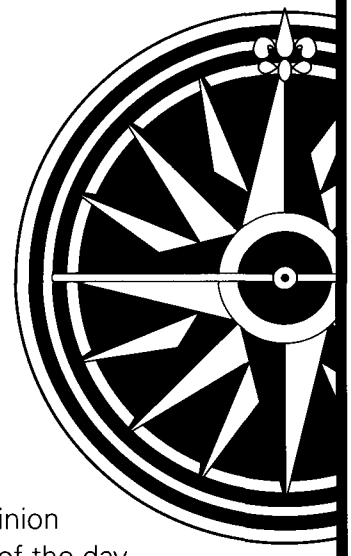

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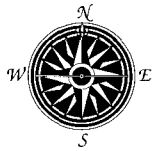

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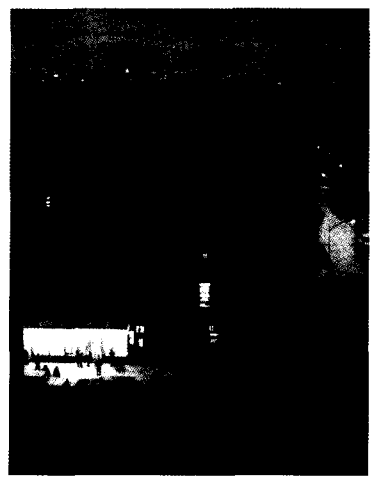

Our cover shows a detail from *Still Open, 1994*, by Douglas Safranek. Egg tempera on panel, 4⅞ x 4 inches. Collection of The Museum of the City of New York. Courtesy, Schmidt Bingham Gallery.

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Bravo, Harry

Herbert London

There's a nondescript building at 42 West 28th Street where a sign reads: THE PLACE WHERE TIN PAN ALLEY BEGAN. I'd bet that few New Yorkers have noticed the placard and not one in a million knows how Tin Pan Alley got its name.

The answer lies in the remarkable story of Harry Von Tilzer, born Aaron Gumbinsky in Detroit in 1872 to a German Jewish beauty store owner and his wife. At 14, Harry left home to become a tumbler in the Cole Brothers circus. He then joined a traveling burlesque troupe and changed his name, grafting a "Von" onto his mother's maiden name, Tilzer, to concoct his new surname.

Arriving in New York in 1892, he went to work as a saloon pianist, with some brothel piano playing on the side. He began to write songs for vaudeville, and in 1898 wrote his first really successful tune, "My Old New Hampshire Home."

Two years later, he wrote "Bird In A Gilded Cage," which became a national sensation. Even Teddy Roosevelt described it as his favorite song. When Von Tilzer met T.R., he explained to the president that the bird in the title was a metaphor for a kept woman. Roosevelt said, "Harry, never repeat that story."

By 1905 Von Tilzer had written a bevy of hits, including "On a Sunday Afternoon," "Down on the Farm," "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," and "Wait Till the Sun Shines Nellie," the most popular song of the first decade of the century. On the strength of these hits, he opened his own music publishing company at 42 West 28th Street, and he helped to establish a distinctive American industry, specializing in American popular composers.

Von Tilzer persuaded four of his brothers to join him at the newly established company, all taking the Von Tilzer name. One brother, Albert, wrote "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and "Apple Blossom Time," two of the twentieth century's most popular songs. Soon, almost every famous name in the nation's nascent popular music industry had an association with the Von Tilzer Music Company. Harry continued to roll out his own hits, too—including, in 1911, the famous "I Want a Girl Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad."

Before long, the editors of the *New York Tribune* assigned a reporter—an aspiring composer himself—to write a story about Von Tilzer. When the newsman arrived at the cavernous building on 28th Street, he wrote, he heard a "tinny" sound emanating from several pianos. Adopting a practice Von Tilzer started, songwriters would put newspapers behind piano strings in order to get an odd, high-pitched sound when they played. Cascading from wall to wall, the noise sounded like someone banging tin pans in an echoing alleyway. When the article about Harry came out, it bore the title "Mr. Tin Pan Alley."

The most famous musicians of the twentieth century got their start in that 28th Street building. When Harry met a banjo-playing busker in front of the Bowery Follies, he took a liking to the youngster. Harry encouraged him to rework his 1904 song "Alexander" and to change his name from Izzy Balin to something more distinguished—as Harry himself had done. Balin reworked the song into "Alexander's Rag Time Band" and his name into Irving Berlin.

Another song plugger who caught Harry's eye had aspirations to become a composer. Harry published his first song, "When You Want Them You Can't Have Them; When You Have Them You Don't Want Them"—summing up his philosophy of women. The songwriter became America's best-known composer, George Gershwin.

Hearing a young singer belt out a song in Atlantic City, Harry invited him to appear at a vaudeville show in New York. The young man arrived to discover, to his dismay, a show in progress. Von Tilzer told him that during intermission the audience would leave for drinks. "So you want me to sing to an empty theater?" the irritated singer asked. "No," Harry replied; "get up on the stage as the people begin to leave; implore them to stay in their seats. Get down on one knee; beg them to listen." The young singer tried it, and often thereafter he sang on one knee. His name: Al Jolson.

Harry Von Tilzer is unknown today, despite his fame and fortune while alive. But the spirited contributions he made to popular music remain a vital and enduring part of our culture. ■

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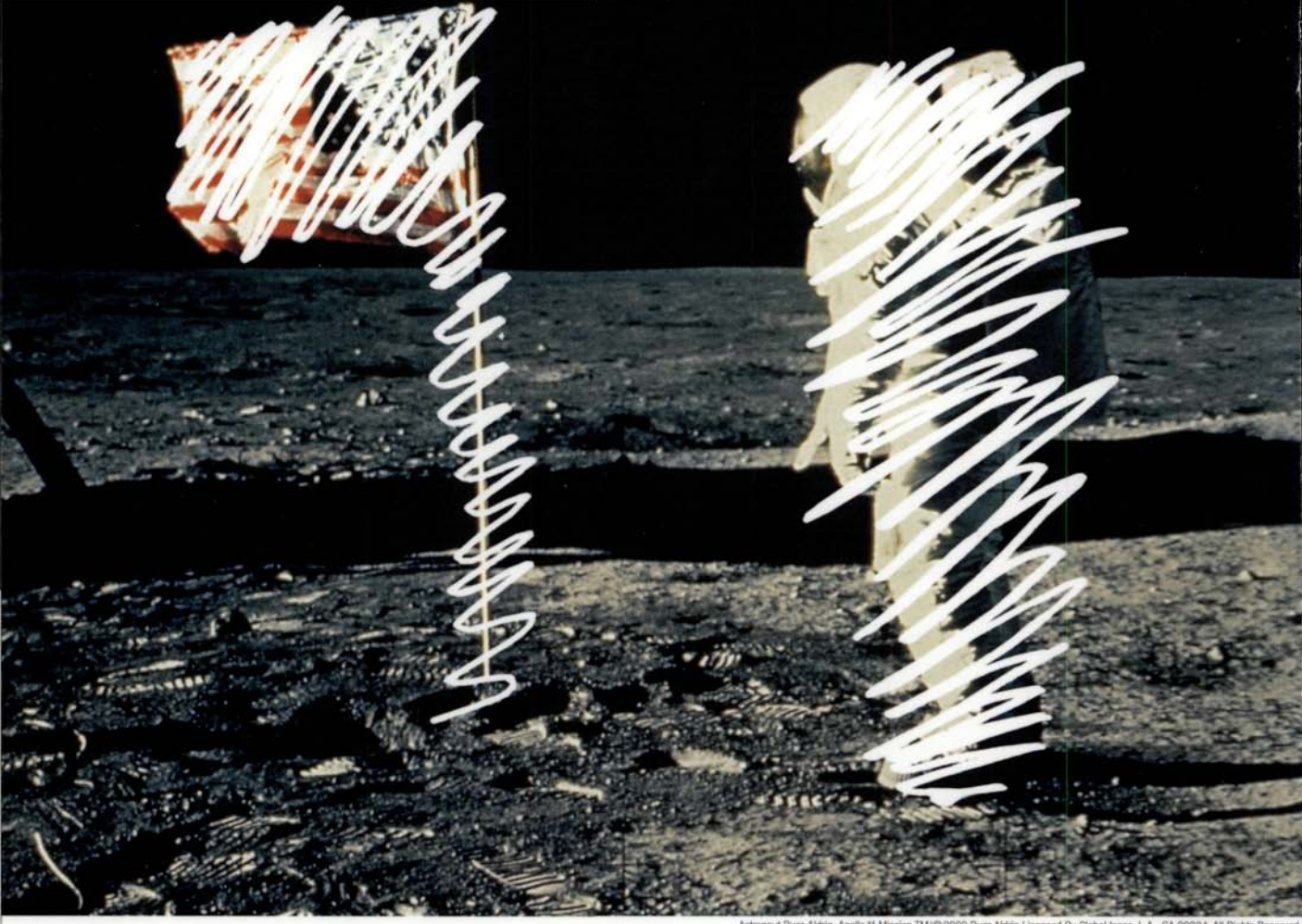

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